

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE.

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THE Nightingale had a secret. His father and grandfather had had it before him, and because they had kept it, he kept it too; for they were an old-fashioned family, and held respectfully to the customs of their ancestors.

"Where do you go to when you leave off singing?" asked the Poets; but the Nightingale only answered them by a trill which told nothing they could understand, and was so beautiful they forgot to ask any more questions, but began to write verses about it instead.

"What becomes of you when you have hatched your eggs and reared your young ones?" growled the Naturalists. But the Nightingale piped his answer over their heads, and that let out no more than the trill had done.

Yet he kept friendly with all creation, and contrived to communicate with all. Indeed, it was generally thought he came from everybody's country, for he understood all languages; or rather, I ought to say, himself spoke the universal language which all creatures understand without learning.

Certain it is he was a general favourite, and welcome wherever he went, as any one is sure to be who knows the universal language, and consequently can feel what his neighbour feels—that is, sympathize with him. Only in the Nightingale's case nobody could quite make out whether they were sympathizing with him or he with them. Not that it mattered which, perhaps, and the truth was, there was a mixture of both. Somehow or other when he sang everybody felt their own hearts touched; and if that is not a proof he spoke the universal language, there can be no such thing as a universal language in the world.

Accordingly, when our Nightingale came out of the copse, near a magnificent kitchen-garden, one still midnight, and perched on an apple-tree bough and sang, everything that was alive and growing roused up to listen and converse.

Now it was a very choice kitchen-garden, and there were a great many foreigners in it. Tomatas, Portugal Onions, French Marrows

and Beans, for instance ; American Cress, New Zealand Spinach, and in fact ever so many more whose names I can't remember. And as plants are liable to be home-sick, like men, these occasionally bewailed themselves, wished themselves back at home, and treated with silent contempt the common cabbages, turnips, and even celery, who, as well as the weeds, called the garden their native land. Some of the foreigners had become naturalized, it is true, by long residence, and these took the matter easier ; among them the Jerusalem Artichoke and Potato, though the former steadily refused to flower under a sun so little to be depended upon for its appearance ; and the ancestral dissatisfaction at being exiles still lingered in their natures altogether, and would break out from time to time ; a fact which sufficiently accounts for the potato disease.

As to those obtained year by year from abroad, of course they were aliens altogether, and what communion could they possibly have either with the natives, or the settlers who had been inhabitants so long that their origin was almost forgotten ? At any rate they had none, and the nearest neighbours stood aloof and unloving, as if there was no common nature among them.

What wonder, then, that when the Nightingale opened his warbling in that universal language of his, a thousand voices saluted him with welcomes !

"Go on, lovely musician, dear friend, kind countryman !" wept one (it was the Portugal Onion). "At last I can open my heart. Tell me more of my own bright land and people. Those beautiful gardens, that crystal river, the purple mountains, the glorious city—I know them all ! Your song transports me there once more. It is the Tagus I hear rushing, as it pours from hills and woods to water the gardens on its banks ! Oh, waters of comfort and refreshment—oh, gardens of delight, why am I banished among strangers, insensible and dull of heart ?"

"The same, sun by day, the same moon by night, stars watching above," sang the Nightingale, in reply. "Fountains flowing for all, hopes that comfort all, love all-embracing, joy for ever in store, one home at last, ours, ever ours."

Now this was merely the end of his song. What he had said besides, only his listeners can tell you.

"How our country must miss you !" sighed another, (the Tomata, who had lately been planted out), "but how could you leave it ? Who brought you away ? Shall you ever go back ? If you do, take me

with you. Back, back to the sunny fields where we grew together in beauty by thousands. Here I feel I must perish before the sun has reddened my cheeks, uncared for and unknown."

"The same sun by day, the same moon by night, stars watching above," sang the Nightingale, as before. "Clouds drift and pass, the blue heaven lies ever behind. Love wide as the world, hopes common to all, joys shared together, one home at last, ours, ever ours." But still it was only the end of his song. And just then the moon broke out, and looked down upon the garden; and stars peeped at it too. And the foreigners whispered for once in concert. "The singer is right; here is the moon he talked of. There is but one garden then after all. We are but moved to another corner. We are not so far from home all the time. These are friends around us, of course;" saying which they took comfort, and settled down peacefully in their beds, prepared to work out the ends of their being in comfort.

And so the French Beans and Marrows put in their word, for like the others they heard the voice as if from their native land; and the Marrow crept an inch or two further over the hotbed, saying, "I must return, I must return, this isolation is worse than solitude!" and the Bean got about as much higher up his pole for the same purpose; but when they heard the conclusion, "The same sun by day, the same moon by night, &c.," the native land seemed merged into a common land, and the garden felt a world instead of a small enclosure. "Good, good, very good," cried they therefore at last. "If this be true there is no need to wander further." It was well perhaps they came to this conclusion, for the efforts they had begun to make would not have carried them far on the road to India, or even France!

Then beside all the smaller plants (of whom I have given but an instance or two), there were the fruit trees just in the same state. These were settlers, and you might have thought had got used to the country which had adopted them. But no, unless people were very tender over them, and gave them a warm wall and saved their roots from getting into ungenial soil, they got terribly out of sorts, and bore no fruit. There was the Peach, for instance; his case was a very trying one. He could trace back his pedigree to Persia, and probably thought the Romans very presumptuous for ever transporting him to Italy; and here he was now, in cold, grey England. And he felt his whole being soften as he listened to the Nightingale's song.

"It is the country of my ancestors you sing of," cried he, passionately; "I must have heard you before in dreams! Sing on, Bird of the East! Sing on, friend of the blushing rose gardens. You waft me to paradise. All is over for me, so long exiled in cold and darkness. Yet sing on of the fresh-falling fountains, and suns that never go down, and I shall go on dreaming the beautiful dream of the past."

"The same sun by day, the same moon by night, stars watching above," trilled the Nightingale, as usual. "Love the ever fresh fountain, love the undying flower, love the eternal sunshine, ours, ever ours."

"I am content," sighed the Peach tree, peacefully, and went on blossoming in hope.

It is needless to go on. The Nightingale now took flight, and the next place he paused at was a flower garden skirted by elm trees and a brook.

Now within the garden palings stood a cottage-villa bleached white in the rays of the moon. And within the villa at an open window in an upper chamber sat a young lad almost as white. To-morrow he must leave the home of his childhood, and begin life in earnest for himself. To-morrow this room would be his room no more. His place must be far away among strangers.—Dismantled walls and bookshelves, ye can shed no tears, though ye bring many, and look down on broken hearts like cruel ghosts of the past!—But the lad in the upper chamber could not weep, for hard, unreasoning sorrow stiffened his heart. "The room is yours for ever while we live;" his mother had said in vain an hour before. "I shall put other pictures up against you come home!" the little sister had whispered to no purpose before she went to bed.

"Home, home!" murmured the unceasing sorrow within. "Thou hast a home here no longer. When once thou goest forth thou art seeking it elsewhere—not here."

The lad buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud.

Then suddenly the Nightingale's song rang through the still, clear air; and the young man started to his feet.

As of old, no doubt, and often heard, but yet with some new feeling now, fell the sounds on his troubled ear, and he was roused from the lassitude of despair.

"So, so, yes, so, I have heard you before; but, alas, how often with indifference, and now you torture my brain! You tell me of the home I must leave, and all the happiness that is over for ever. Who

will care for me so much again? Yet who will miss me if they know I am well elsewhere? I hate life and success—everything—and you, for you break my heart! Be silent, and leave me alone!”

But the Nightingale went on.

“The same sun by day, the same moon by night, stars watching above; love uniting all; grief fleeting as a shadow; hope gilding the future; one Heaven surrounding; one home at last.”

This was but the end of the song as usual, and the young man did not understand a word of what it meant, any more than what had been said before. But words are not necessary to the universal language. It makes itself felt, instead. And the young man covered his face with his hands again, but now because he had burst into tears.

And if he presently acknowledged himself a fool for despairing, and owned it was weakhearted to cling too closely to “beggarly elements,” and then rose to higher hopes and resolves,—what right hast thou to smile, oh reader? Well for thee if thou hast no greater weaknesses to correct! Well for thee if thy heart is still so pure that the sympathies of the lower creation can touch it!

Nor was it to the young lad only the Nightingale sang. The little sister heard him as she lay weeping on her pillow for the brother who would not be comforted. The mother, too, heard him as she mused in the night watches over the future of her son. And the one was soothed, she knew not how or whence, and fell asleep before the strain had ended, to dream of guardian angels walking with men. The other listened and pondered till reliance and hope overruled fear. For this was what was brought to her mind:

“So insignificant, and yet so gifted; so humble, and yet so cared for; our life so secret from others, yet not one of us forgotten before God! So ignorant, yet teaching you this lesson: ‘How much more are ye better than the fowls? oh ye of little faith.’”

Remembering which, rest came to the mother too; but whether it was brought to her by her own reflection, or the song of the bird, she did not inquire. . . .

. . . Now, then, if you want to be a comfort to your fellow-creatures, learn the universal language. So alone can you help forward the course of that mysterious love which, in spite of and beyond the darkest dispensations, rules the Universe. For the Word that came down from Heaven, and Love, are one.

EDITOR.

MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES.

THE SNORING GHOST—(*continued*).

“**I** SHALL not give you a lengthened account of our unpacking, neither, dear Ida; though it was as enjoyable, but less protracted than the packing-up had been. How we revelled in the spacious drawers and cupboards, over which we were queens, and how strictly we followed one of my mother's wise counsels—‘unpack to the bottom of your box at once, however short your visit may be; it saves time in the end.’ We did unpack to the lowest book (an artificial system of memory, which I had long been purposing to study, which I thought to find spare moments to get up here, and which, I may as well confess, I did not look at during the visit, and have not learnt to this day.) We divided shelves and pegs with all fairness, and as a final triumph found a use for the elaborate watch pockets that hung above our pillows. They were rich with an unlimited expenditure of quilled ribbon, and must have given a great deal of trouble to some one who had not very many serious occupations in this life. Fatima and I wished that we had watches to put in them, till the happy thought suddenly struck one of us, that we could keep in them our respective papers of good habits.

“Bedford came in whilst we were in the midst of our labours, and warmly begged us to leave everything to her, as she would put our things away for us. The red-haired young lady had sent her, and she became a mainstay of practical comfort to us during our visit. She seemed a haven of humanity after the conventions of the drawing-room. From her we got incidental meals when we were hungry, spirits of wine when Fatima's tooth ached, warnings when we were near to being late for breakfast, little modern and fashionable turns to our hair and clothes, and familiar anecdotes of this household and of others in which she had lived. I remember her with gratitude.

“Miss Lucy came home before our putting away was fairly finished, and we had tea with her in the schoolroom. She was a slight, sharp, lively young lady, looking older than fifteen to us, rather pretty, and very self-possessed. She scanned us from head to foot when we first

met, and I felt as if her eyes had found defects innumerable, which seemed the less likely, as she also was short-sighted. As her governess was away visiting a sick relative, Miss Lucy did the honours of the schoolroom. She was cold and inattentive at first, became patronizing at tea, and ended by being gracious. In her gracious mood she was both affectionate and confidential. She called us 'my dear girls,' put her arms round us as we sat in the dark, and chattered without a pause about herself, her governesses, her sister, and her sister's husband.

" 'A wedding in the house,' she observed, 'is very good fun, particularly if you take a principal part in it. I was chief bride's-maid, you know, my dear girls. But I'll tell you the whole affair from the first. You know I had never been bride's-maid before, and I couldn't make up my mind about how I should like the dresses,' &c., &c. And we had got no further in the story than Miss Lucy's own costume, when we were called to dress and go downstairs.

" 'What are you going to put on?' she asked, balancing herself at our door and peering in.

" 'White muslin!' we said with some pride, for they were new frocks, and splendid in our eyes.

" 'I have had so many muslins, I am tired of them,' she said; 'I shall wear a pink silk to-night. The trimming came from London. Perhaps I may wear a muslin to-morrow; I have an Indian one. But you shall see my dresses to-morrow, my dear girls.'

" With which she left us, and we put on our new frocks (which were to be *the* evening dresses of our visit) in depressed spirits. This was owing to the thought of the pink silk, and of the possibility of a surfeit of white muslin.

" During the evening we learnt another of Miss Lucy's peculiarities. Affectionate as she had been when we were alone together, she was no sooner among the grown-up young ladies downstairs than she kept with them as much as she was permitted, and seemed to forget us altogether. Perhaps a fit of particularly short sight attacked her; for she seemed to look over us, away from us, on each side of us, anywhere but at us, and to be quite unconscious of our existence. The red-haired young lady had made her fetch us a large scrap-book, and we sat with this before our eyes, and the soft monotonous chit-chat of our hostess in our ears, as she talked and worked with some elder ladies on the sofa. It seemed a long gossip, with no particular end or beginning, in which tatting,

trimmings, military distinction, linens, servants, honourable conduct, sentiment, settlements, expectations, and Bath waters were finely blended. From the constant mention of Cecilia and the dear major, it was evident that the late wedding was the subject of discourse; indeed, for that matter, it remained the prime topic of conversation during our stay.

"Cecilia and the dear major were at Bath, and their letters were read aloud at the breakfast-table. I remember wondering at the deep interest that all the ladies seemed to take in the bride's pretty flow of words about the fashions, the drives, and the pump-room, and the long lists of visitors' names; this, too, without any connection between the hearers and the people and places mentioned. When anybody did recognise a name, however, about which she knew anything, it seemed like the finding of a treasure. All the ladies bore down upon it at once, dug up the family history to its farthest known point, and divided the subject among them. Miss Lucy followed these letters closely, and remembered them wonderfully, though (as I afterwards found) she had never seen Bath, and knew no more of the people mentioned than the little hearsay facts she had gathered from former letters.

"It is a very useful art, my dear Ida, and one in which I have sadly failed all my life, to be able to remember who is related to whom, what watering-place such a family went to the summer before last, and which common friends they met there, &c. But like other arts it demands close attention, forbids day-dreaming, and takes up a good deal of time.

"*'Wasn't it odd,'* said Miss Lucy, one morning after breakfast, *'that Cecilia and the major should meet those Hicksons?'*

"*'Who are the Hicksons?'* I asked.

"*'Oh! my dear girl, don't you remember, in Cecilia's last letter, her telling us about the lady she met in that shop when they were in town, buying a shawl the counterpart of her own, and it seems so odd they should turn up in Bath, and be such nice people? Don't you remember mamma said it must be the same family as that Colonel Hickson who was engaged to a girl with one eye, and she caught the small-pox and got so much marked, and he broke it off?'*

"*'Small-pox and one eye would look very ugly,'* Fatima languidly observed; and this subject drifted after the rest.

"One afternoon, I remember, it chanced that we were left alone with our hostess in the drawing-room. No one else happened to be in

the way to talk to, and the good lady talked to us. We were clever girls for our age, I fancy, and we had been used to talk a good deal with our mother; at any rate, we were attentive listeners, and I do not think our hostess required much more of us. I think she was glad of anybody who had not heard the whole affair from beginning to end, and so she put up her feet on the sofa, and started afresh with the complete history of her dear Cecilia from the cradle; and had gone on to the major, his military exploits abroad, his genteel connections at home, and the tendency to gout in the family which troubled him at times, and was a sad anxiety to her dear child, when visitors were announced.

"Our intelligent attention had gained favour for us, and we were introduced to these ladies as 'daughters of a very dear friend of mine, whom I have not seen for years,' on which one lady gave a sweet glance and a tight smile, and murmured:

" 'So pleasant to renew acquaintance in the children;' and the other ladies gave sweet glances, and tight smiles also, and echoed:

" 'So pleasant!'

" 'Such sensible girls!' said our hostess, as if we were not there; 'like women of fifty. So like their dear mother! Such treasures to my little Lucy! You know she has lost her dear sister,' &c., &c.

"For then the ladies drew together, and our hostess having got a fresh audience, we retired to distant arm-chairs, a good deal bewildered.

"But to return to our first evening.

"Miss Lucy and we retired together, and no sooner had the drawing-room door closed behind us, than she wound her arms round our waists, and became as devoted as if we had been side by side the whole evening.

" 'I'll tell you what I'll do, my dear girls,' she said when we reached our room; 'I'll come and sleep with you (there's lots of room for three), and then I can go on about Cecilia's affair, and if we don't finish to-night we can go on to-morrow morning before we get up. I always wake early, so I can call you. I'll come back when I'm ready for bed.'

"And she vanished.

"We were in bed when she returned. Her hair had been undergoing some wonderful process, and was now stowed away under a large and elaborate night-cap.

“ ‘Bedford was so slow,’ said she ; ‘and then, you know, I got into bed, and let her tidy the room, and then when she was fairly gone, out I got, and here I am. We shall be as comfortable as possible ; I’ll be in the middle, and then I can have you on each side of me, my dear girls ;’ and in she sprang.

“ ‘Did you notice this?’ she asked, holding up her hand, and pointing out the edging on the sleeve of her night-dress ; ‘it’s a new pattern ; do you know it? Oh ! my dears, the yards and yards of tatting that Cecilia had for her trousseau !’

“ ‘Fatima and I were not rich in tatting edgings, and rejoiced when the conversation took another turn.

“ ‘About the proposal,’ she rambled on ; ‘do you know I don’t really know whereabouts Henry (that is the major, my brother-in-law,’ she added, with one of the little attacks of dignity to which she was subject) ‘proposed, or what he said. I asked Cecy, but she wouldn’t tell me. She was very cross, often ; I’m very glad she’s married. I think sisters ought to marry off as fast as they can ; they never get on well in a house together, you know.’

“ ‘I fairly gasped at this idea, and Fatima said bluntly :

“ ‘There are lots of us, and we get on.’

“ ‘Ah !’ said Miss Lucy, in tones of wisdom ; ‘wait till you’re a little older, and you’ll see. Cecy was at school with two sisters who hated each other like poison, and they were obliged to dress alike, and the younger wore out her things much faster than the other one, but she was obliged to wear them till her sister’s were done. She used to wish so her sister would marry, Cecy said, and the best fun is, now they’re both in love with the same man. He’s the curate of the church they go to.’

“ ‘Which of them is he in love with?’ I asked.

“ ‘Oh, neither that I know of,’ said Miss Lucy composedly. ‘They don’t know him, you know ; but they sit close under the pulpit, and they have such struggles about which shall get into the corner of the pew that’s nearest. Cecy and I weren’t like that ; but still I’m very glad she’s married. Now wasn’t it stupid of her not to tell me ? I should never have told anybody, you know. And don’t you wonder what gentlemen *do* say, and how they say it ? He couldn’t propose sitting, and I think standing would be very awkward. I suppose he knelt. Aunt Maria doesn’t approve of gentlemen kneeling ; she says it’s idolatry. I think

they must look very silly. Cecy wouldn't even tell me what he said. She said he spoke to mamma, and mamma said his conduct was highly honourable; but I think it was very stupid. Do you know, my dears, I have a cousin who was really married at Gretna Green? She married an officer. He was splendidly handsome; but people said things against him, and her parents objected. So they eloped, and then went to Wales, to such a lovely place! Wasn't it romantic? They quarrelled afterwards though; he lives abroad now. People ought to be careful. I shall be very careful myself; I mean to refuse the first few offers I get.'

"And so Miss Lucy rambled on, perfectly unconscious of the melancholy and yet ludicrous way in which she degraded serious subjects, which she was not old enough to understand, or wise enough to reverence. We were too young then to see it fully; but her frivolity jarred upon us, though she amused us, and excited our curiosity. She was not worse than many other girls, with plenty of inquisitiveness and sharp sense, and not too much refinement and feeling; whose accomplishments are learnt from the 'first masters,' and whose principles are picked up from gossip, servants, and second-rate books; digested by an ignorant, inquisitive, and undisciplined mind.

"I won't try to recall any more of it, dear Ida. I remember it was a continuous stream of unedifying gossip, varied with small boastings about her own family. 'We've so many connections,' was a favourite phrase of Miss Lucy's, and it seemed to mean a great deal. 'Do you like making trees?' she asked. I was getting sleepy, and without much thought replied, 'I love trees beyond anything, and I like growing oak trees in bottles.' Miss Lucy's, 'My dear girl, I mean family trees, genealogical trees,' was patronizing to scorn. 'I am making one for us,' she added. 'We are descended from King Stephen.'

"I believe I was the first to fall asleep that night. The last words I remember hearing were 'We've so many connections.'

"The next day's post brought news from Bath of more general interest to the household. The plans of Cecilia and the major were changed; they were coming to her mother's on the following Monday.

"'My dear girls, I *am* so glad!' said Miss Lucy; 'you'll see them. But you will have to move out of your room, I'm sorry to say.'

"And for the next twelve hours Miss Lucy was more descriptive of her family glories in general, and of the glories of her sister and brother-in-law in particular, than ever.

"Sunday was a day of mixed experiences to us ; some pleasant and some the reverse. Miss Lucy in her best clothes was almost intolerably patronizing, and a general stiffness seemed to pervade everything, the ladies' silk dresses included. After breakfast we dawdled about till it was time to dress for church, and as most of the ladies took about five minutes more than they had allowed for, it seemed likely that we should be late. At the last moment Miss Lucy lost her Prayer Book, and it was not till another five minutes had gone in the search that she remembered having left it in church the Sunday before. This being settled we all stowed away in the carriages and drove off. It was only a short drive ; but when we came in sight of the quaint little church there was no sound of bells, and it became evident that we were late. In the porch we shook out our dresses, the Irishman divided the burden of Prayer Books he had been gallantly bearing, our hostess turned back from the half-open door to say in a loud and encouraging whisper, 'It's only the confession ;' and we swept up the little church into a huge square pew.

"My dear Ida, I must tell you that we had been brought up to have a just horror of being late for service, this being a point on which my father was what is called 'very particular.' Fatima and I therefore felt greatly discomposed by our late and disturbing entrance, though we were in no way to blame. We had also been taught to kneel during the prayers, and it was with a most uncomfortable sensation of doubt and shamefacedness that we saw one lady after another sit down and bend her bonnet over her lap, and hesitated ourselves to follow our own customs in the face of such a majority. But the red-haired young lady seemed fated to help us out of our difficulties. She sank at once on her knees in a corner of the pew, her green silk falling round her ; we knelt by her side, and the question was settled. The little Irishman cast a doubtful glance at her for a moment and then sat down, bending his head deeply into his hat. We went through a similar process about responding, which did not seem to be the fashion with our hostess and her friends. The red-haired young lady held to her own customs however, and we held with her. Our responses were the less conspicuous as they were a good deal drowned by the voice of an old gentleman in the next pew. Diversity seemed to prevail in the manners of the congregation. This gentleman stood during prayers, balancing a huge Prayer Book on the corner of the pew, and responding

in a loud voice, more devout than tuneful, keeping exact time with the parson also, as if he had a grudge against the clerk and felt it due to himself to keep in advance of him. I remember, Ida, that as we came in, he was just saying 'those things which we ought *not* to have done,' and he said it in so terrible a voice, and took such a glance at us over his gold-rimmed spectacles, that I wished the massive pulpit-hangings would fall and bury my confusion. When the text of the sermon had been given out, our hostess rustled up, and drew the curtains well round our pew. Opposite to me, however, there was a gap through which I could see the old gentleman. He had settled himself facing the pulpit, and sat there gazing at the preacher with a rigid attention which seemed to say—'Sound doctrine, if you please; I have my eye on you.'

"We returned as we came.

" 'Is there afternoon service?' I asked Miss Lucy.

" 'Oh, yes!' was the reply, 'the servants go in the afternoon.

" 'Don't you?' I asked.

" 'Oh, no!' said Miss Lucy, 'once is enough. You can go with the maids, if you want to, my dears,' she added, with one of the occasional touches of insolence in which she indulged.

"Afternoon arrived, and I held consultation with Fatima as to what we were to do.

"When once roused, Fatima was more resolute than I.

" 'Of course we'll go,' said she, 'what's the use of having written out all our good rules and sticking at this? We always go twice at home. Let's look for Bedford.'

"On which mission I set forth, but when I reached the top of the stairs I caught sight of the red-haired young lady, in her bonnet and shawl, standing at the open door, a Prayer Book in her hand. I dashed downstairs, and entered the hall just as the Irishman came into it by another door. In his hand was a Prayer Book also, and he picked up his hat, and went smiling towards her. But as he approached the young lady, she looked so much annoyed—not to say cross—that I hesitated to go forwards.

" 'Are you going to church?' said the little Irishman, with a pleased look.

" 'I don't know,' said the young lady, briefly, 'are you?'

" 'I was——' he began, and stopped short, looking puzzled and vexed.

“ ‘Is no one else going?’ he asked, after a moment’s pause.

“ ‘No one else ever does go,’ she said, impatiently, and moved into the hall.

“The Irishman coloured.

“ ‘I am in the habit of going twice myself, though you may not think it,’ he said, quietly; ‘my poor mother always did. But I do not pretend to go to such good purpose as she did, or as you would, so if it is to lie between us——’ and, without finishing his sentence, he threw his book (not too gently) on to the table, and, just lifting his hat as he passed her, dashed out into the garden.

“I did not at all understand this little scene, but, as soon as he was gone, I ran up to ask our friend if she were going to church, and would take us. She consented, and I went back in triumph to Fatima. As there was no time to lose, we dressed quickly enough; so that I was rather surprised, when we went down, to find the Irish gentleman, with his face restored to its usual good humour, standing by our friend, and holding her Prayer Book as well as his own. The young lady did not speak, but, cheerfully remarking that we had plenty of time before us, he took our books also, and we all set forth.

“I remember that walk so well, Ida! The hot, sweet summer afternoon—the dusty plants by the pathway—the clematis in the hedges (I put a bit into my Prayer Book, which was there for years)—the grasshoppers and flies that our dresses caught up from the long grass, and which re-appeared as we sat during the sermon.

“The old gentleman was in his pew, but his glance was almost benevolent, as, in good time, we took our places. We (literally) *followed* his example with much heartiness in the responses; and, if he looked over into our pew during prayers (and from his position he could hardly avoid it), he must have seen that even the Irishman had rejected compromises, and that we all knelt together. There was one other feature of that service not to be forgotten. When the sermon was ended, and I had lost sight of the last grasshopper, in my hasty rising, we found that there was to be a hymn. It was the old custom of this church so to conclude Evening Prayer. No one seemed to use a book—it was Bishop Ken’s evening hymn, which everyone knew, and, I think, everyone sang. But the feature of it to us was when the Irishman began to sing. From her startled glance, I think not even the red-haired young lady had known that he possessed so beautiful a voice.



MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES.

It had a clearness without effort, a tone, a truth, a pathos, that I have not heard again. It sounded strangely above the nasal tones of the school-children, and the scraping of a solitary fiddle. Even our neighbour, who had lustily followed the rhythm of the tune, though without much varying from the note on which he responded, softened his own sounds and turned to look at the Irishman, who sang on without noticing, till, in the last verse, he seemed disturbed to discover how many eyes were on him. Happily, self-consciousness had come too late. The hymn was ended.

"We knelt again for the Benediction, and then went back through the summer fields.

"The red-haired young lady talked very little. Once she said:

" 'How is it we have never heard you sing?'

"To which the Irishman replied:

" 'I don't understand music, I sing by ear; and I hate "company" performances. I will sing to you whenever you like.'

" 'Mary,' said Fatima, when we were in our room again, 'I believe those two will marry each other some day.'

" 'So do I,' I answered; 'but don't say anything about it to Lucy.'

" 'No, indeed!' said Fatima, warmly. So we kept this idea sacred from Miss Lucy's comments—why, I do not think either of us could have told in words.

J. H. G.

[*To be continued.*]

LUCK.

From the Persian Moonshee.

A PERSON said to his servant, "If you see two crows together early in the morning, apprise me of it, that I also may behold them, as it will be a good omen that I shall pass the whole day pleasantly." Soon after the servant saw two crows in one place: he informed his master; but when the latter came, he only saw one, the other having flown away. He was very angry, and began to horsewhip the servant; at which time a friend sent him some victuals. The servant said, "O, my lord! you only saw one crow, and have obtained victuals; had you seen two, you would have met with my fare!"

THE COUSINS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDNEY GREY," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE Mannerings returned to the cottage on the following day, and as the weather continued unsettled, nearly a week passed before there was any further intercourse between Rhos-y-Gaer and Carnellen.

On Saturday Mr. Sergeant Lord came down from London, and on Sunday he, with Hugh, Beatrice, Ratcliffe, and Magda, spent the interval between services at Carnellen.

Hugh provoked Harry's contempt by shivering and grumbling that he did not see any fun in walking four miles to church through a dripping wood in the rain.

"You would not stay away from church because it rained?" said Harry, amazed.

"Well, no," Hugh acknowledged; but he wished they had never come to such an out-of-the-way place. He wished himself back in London, going to King's school every day.

Harry undertook to prove that there was plenty of fun to be had in the country in fine weather, and his histories of exploits by sea and land spurred up Ratty to try to match them with stories of school life. Hugh only put in a word now and then, generally a flat contradiction, which spoilt the point of Ratcliffe's story; but to Alice's and Arthur's surprise Magda joined Ratcliffe in laughing at and mimicking Mr. Ward.

"Have you gone round to Ratcliffe's and Kathleen's side, then?" Alice asked, rather anxiously, when she and Magda were alone together. "Have you found out that Mr. Ward really is as spiteful as Ratcliffe says?"

"Oh, dear no!" answered Magda. "I don't take sides in the stupid way Kathleen does, and I advise you not to let Harry join in such folly. Hugh said as he came along, that he would warn Harry against swallowing all Ratty's stories against Mr. Ward, if he thought there was a chance of Harry's attending to a word he said."

"Why should not Harry attend?" asked Alice, surprised. "Hugh does not give him a chance."

"Oh, that is Hugh's way," said Magda; "and just now he is suffering from a very bad fit of fancying that everybody hates him. He has never got right since one unlucky day, when papa was angry with him for seeming jealous of Ratcliffe's winning a prize from him at school. I say all I can to put him in good humour with himself again, but sometimes I really am glad to leave him alone, and chat with Ratcliffe: one does get so tired of doleful people, you know."

"I don't know, for Harry is never doleful; and I don't believe that anything in the world could make him even seem jealous. I am afraid Hugh must be very unlike Harry, and that there is no chance of their ever being friends."

Magda tried to explain away the unfavourable impression of Hugh's disposition that she saw her words had created; but the fear of letting out more of the history of the stolen verses than would be convenient confused her explanation, and Alice remained convinced that Hugh had been a good deal to blame somehow, though Magda was too good a sister to like to believe it.

Mrs. Mannering settled with the Sergeant before he took leave, that Harry and Arthur were to go to Rhos-y-Gaer on the following morning, to begin their studies with Mr. Ward.

The morning seemed very long to Alice while her brothers were away, and when they returned she was a good deal disappointed to find they were both too anxious about the lessons they had to prepare for the next day to answer her questions as fully as she would have liked.

Harry declared that Mr. Ward had hardly spoken a word to him; he had pointed out the place where he was to sit, and had given him a piece of "Ellis" to write out, which occupied him all the morning. When he brought it up, Mr. Ward just glanced at it, tossed it down on the table, and then set him another exercise in a different part of the book to write for the next day. If that was teaching, Harry thought, he could do it himself.

Several weeks passed in this humdrum way, and then the Sergeant had to return to London for a time; and as he wished to take Beatrice with him, he persuaded Mrs. Mannering to pay a visit to Rhos-y-Gaer while he was away, bringing her three children with her.

The carriage, after taking the Sergeant and Beatrice to the station, called at Carnellen to convey Mrs. Mannering and Alice to Rhos-y-Gaer one fine September afternoon, and they had a delightful drive through the wood to Rhos-y-Gaer. Almost all the school-room party were in the garden when they reached the house, and Alice was seized on by Magda directly the carriage door was opened.

"Come and I will show you my garden home," she said; "such a delightful place among some old apple trees at the very bottom of the kitchen-garden! We can be quite alone there, for luckily the boys have not found it out yet."

"Where are the boys?" asked Alice, rather wistfully.

"Oh, down there by the wood gate—all but Hugh, and he is waiting about for Mr. Ward. Hugh and Mr. Ward mean to walk to the telegraph-house at the top of the mountain. The younger ones are thinking of spending the afternoon on the beach prawn-catching. Don't let them see you, or you won't have another moment's peace. Kathleen and Tommy get worse and worse. Beatrice said she could not have left home comfortably if she had not trusted a great deal to me."

"Then don't you think we had better go down to the beach with them this afternoon?" said Alice. "Our being there would perhaps prevent mischief, and if Beatrice trusted you——"

"How little you know our boys!" interrupted Magda. "The very way to make Ratcliffe and Tommy want to do a thing is for me to advise them not."

"Do you think I should go?" suggested Alice. "Harry and Arthur are so kind, they will often let me put them in mind of things."

"But, my dearest Alice, *I* want you," said Magda. "Mademoiselle has lent me the fourth volume of '*Les Veillées du Chateau*,' and I have kept myself from doing more than just peep at the stories, that we might enjoy them together. Stay though: you can just run down to the gate and tell Harry not to let Tommy wet his feet, and not to get into any of the boats, or go near the quicksands. Those were the things that Beatrice desired me to keep them from doing."

Harry, Arthur, and Kathleen hailed Alice's approach joyfully, and were disappointed when they found she had only come to deliver a message.

"You must be out of your mind, Alice," said Harry, throwing down, in a pet, the huge canvas bag for bringing home marine treasures he

was carrying. "Not wet our feet or get into a boat? What's the use of going down to the beach at all? We had better give it up at once."

"Rubbish!" said Ratcliffe. "Who ever thinks of minding what Magda says? Tommy shall get as wet as ever he likes, and as for the quicksands we'll wait till Magda is with us, and drop her in to teach her to give orders to us."

"Oh, but please," said Alice. "I ought to have said that Beatrice wished——"

"She may *wish*," interrupted Ratty, "but only muffs like old Ward and Magda expect fellows to keep their feet dry when they are shrimping. Come along with us or go back to Magda, for we can't stand here at the gate all the afternoon."

When the party bound for the beach had left the wood, and were crossing the common, they were overtaken by Mr. Ward and Hugh on their way towards the mountain. Mr. Ward stopped them to inquire how long they should be out.

"Till dark, most likely," said Harry, promptly.

"Oh! you are here, are you, Mannering? I am sorry to interfere with your plans of amusement, but did not you understand that you were to correct your exercise before seven o'clock? I shall not look at it again till it has been carefully re-written, remember."

"There's not a bit of use in my writing it over again," said Harry, "I've done it as well as I can, and if I were to write it a hundred times over I could not do it better."

"You'll be kind enough to make the experiment," said Mr. Ward, quietly; "I said once, but since you have chosen to leave the house without completing your work, you will now copy your exercise three times, and have it ready to show by seven o'clock. I advise you to give yourself a full hour. If you leave the beach at five that will do."

"Papa never made me write my exercises more than once, however badly I did them," said Harry, rather sullenly.

"Possibly not, but I don't see how that remark bears on the subject in question," returned Mr. Ward, "I have desired you to write your exercise three times over, and that is enough."

"I should just think so," muttered Harry.

Without noticing Harry's remark, Mr. Ward turned to Kathleen. "How many of you are going on this expedition? Is this all the walking party?"

"Mademoiselle has the toothache, and could not take Tommy and me for a walk," said Kathleen.

"Oh, very well, but you and Tom had better return to the house with your cousin Harry at five o'clock; Ratcliffe is too giddy to take charge of you; I should advise your not staying out later."

Mr. Ward moved off, and there was a general groan of discontent as soon as he was out of hearing.

"The wretch!" cried Harry, "to spoil our first fine half-holiday."

"Now you see what he is," said Ratcliffe. "He would not have cared to keep us in if it had rained, or if we had not just got our new prawn-nets. It's his spite all over. I know him."

"Do you, really?" said Arthur. "Well, I never should have thought that a man who had a microscope of his own, and knew so much about spiders, could have had such a thoroughly bad disposition."

"Well, you see now," said Ratcliffe; "but, I say, let's cut along and spite him by enjoying part of the afternoon, at all events."

Whether it was that the notion of enjoying themselves out of spite had something incongruous in it that defeated its object, or that there was something amiss in the temper of the party, it is certain that things did not go well with them during their walk. They were outrageously merry at times, but they met with several small misfortunes, and were not in the mood to bear them placidly. Ratcliffe broke the handles of the new prawn-nets, by thrusting them between crevices of the rock, where there could not possibly be any prawns; and he grew so cross with Arthur for telling him that it was his own fault, that he called him a stuck-up little prig, and would have boxed his ears if Harry had not prevented him.

In the struggle that followed, Tommy was pushed off the rocky ledge on which they were standing into the sea, and dragged out by Arthur and Kathey in a very wet and doleful condition.

His sobs and declarations that mademoiselle and nurse had especially desired him not to get wet, sobered the whole party, and in their efforts to remedy the disaster they became good friends again.

By Harry's advice, Tommy's wet shoes, stockings, and knickerbockers were taken off, and spread to dry in a recess in the rock; while Tommy himself was strung up in the large shrimp sack, and in that condition set to run a race with a crab Harry had caught.

The difficulty of making the two racehorses start together, of keeping one straight to his course, and of picking up the other when he tumbled down, occupied Harry and Ratcliffe very fully for some time. They did not perceive that the sunshine had passed from the cave, where Tommy's clothes were, nor did they notice a certain ragged figure, that after dodging in and out among the rocks for some time, suddenly turned about, and scuttled with hasty steps across the common. It was not till Tommy had grown tired and rather cross with his numerous falls, that it occurred to Kathleen to wonder what o'clock it was. Harry looked round with more experienced eyes.

"Oh, I say, why the sun's got behind St. Kybie; it must be getting on to seven! What is to be done?"

"Cut away home, and scribble as hard as you can," said Ratcliffe. "Old Ward has not left the telegraph yet; we should have seen something of him coming down the mountain. Oh, there he is! that black spot moving along."

"No, that's Griffiths, the telegraph-man. I know him by the shape of his hat against the sky. He'll be coming down into the town on some errand; and I daresay he has only left his nephew to watch the telegraph while he's away. I wish he had locked old Ward up till he came back again, or that I'd got hold of the key."

"But you'd be half an hour at least climbing up to the telegraph house."

"Not a bit of it. I should get into this boat here of Griffiths', row round the point, and scramble up the rock-ladder in ten minutes."

"What fun it would be!" said Ratcliffe. "I say, do you know where that old man keeps the key? Ward will be lecturing Hugh on the construction of all the telegraphs in the world; he'd never notice what you were doing. Just get into the boat—do!—and let's row round. I'll take care of the boat, while you climb up and see if he is still in the house; and if you can find the key——"

"Oh, I know well enough where Griffiths keeps the key: on a nail in the wall behind the door; I could get at it in a minute; only——"

"Never mind onlys; get in," said Ratcliffe, beginning to unmoor the little boat. "I'll steer; I've learned how to do so much since I came here."

Harry looked on hesitatingly; and meanwhile Arthur and Kathleen, who had gone up to the recess in the rock to bring Tommy's clothes, came running back with horrified faces.

"Oh, what do you think?" said Kathey. "They've gone, all of them—shoes, and stockings, and knickerbockers! What are we to do? Tommy can't hop all the way home in the shrimp bag."

Tommy set up a loud howl at the notion, and Harry and Ratcliffe looked doubtfully at each other.

"Oh, you know, the things must be somewhere!" said Harry, at last. "You must just look about till you find them, Kathey."

"But it's getting so late; and Mr. Ward and Hugh will be coming down from the mountain," groaned Tommy. "I won't be seen tied up in a bag—I won't—I won't!"

"I'll tell you what we must do," said Ratcliffe. "We must just keep old Ward and Hugh quiet where they are for an hour or so, and give ourselves a chance of getting home first. Look here, Kathleen: you go to the cave again, and look for the clothes till we come back to help you. Now be quick, Harry."

The sight of Tommy's piteous face, and the hurry everyone seemed to be in, combined to prevent Harry from thinking soberly of what he was about, and once in the boat he had to give his full attention to its management.

"You take the oars now, and be careful to keep the boat close to shore," said Harry, when they reached the place where he had to land.

"Oh, yes; all right," said Ratcliffe, "only don't be long, or I shan't wait for you; the children will be getting into such a fright. We've been longer coming here than I expected."

A stormy wind had risen in the course of the afternoon; it blew full in Harry's face from the mountain crest, and obliged him to take more time to the ascent than usual.

The door of the telegraph house stood ajar. Harry slipped inside, and stood for an instant hesitating as to what he should do next. Then he heard voices within—Mr. Ward's voice; he was coming down from the upper story, and Harry heard him say:

"I am afraid we have out-stayed our time. I must get home as quickly as I can now, for I have that tiresome Mannering's exercise to correct before dinner."

Another minute, and Mr. Ward would be face to face with Harry, asking him what business he had to be there. There was no time for delay, if the thing was to be done at all; Harry snatched the key from its hiding-place, and sprang out before Mr. Ward had turned the corner

that would have brought him in sight. The next instant he had turned the key in the lock, and was running off as fast as his legs could carry him. He felt a little frightened about what he had done as he scrambled down the cliff side, and could hardly summon voice for a cheery call, when he came to the point in his zig-zag path from which he could hope to make Ratcliffe hear.

"All right; I'm coming," he said; "bring the boat close under the cliff, that I may drop in."

The next step brought him in sight of the tiny bay where he had left the boat; but neither boat nor Ratcliffe was to be seen. He strained his eyes, and called and shouted till he was hoarse.

"The fool of a fellow has let himself be drifted out of the creek," he said to himself; "and I suppose he'll be back at the landing-place by this time. It's too bad of him not to have managed better. I shall have to trudge round the mountain: what a bore!"

Harry entered Rhos-y-Gaer by a side door from the garden, and did not encounter any one on his way to the study, where he shut himself up and began to work diligently. He had made up his mind during his walk that he would tell Mr. Ward what he had done, and ask his forgiveness, directly he saw him; and he felt that he could make his confession most easily if he brought his finished exercise in his hand.

Meanwhile Mrs. Mannering and the two girls sat in the drawing-room, waiting, very patiently, for Mr. Ward and Hugh to come in.

Mrs. Mannering was less disposed than most ladies to get anxious when people did not appear at the proper time; but when it began to grow dark she felt more interested in listening for footsteps outside, than in attending to Magda's chatter.

"Indeed, dear aunt, I don't think you need be at all uneasy," Magda said at last. "Mr. Ward is so forgetful about time. Had we not better sit down to dinner? I am sure you must be hungry."

"I daresay you are," Mrs. Mannering said; and then they went into the dining-room, and as the candles were lighted there, and the blinds drawn down, Mrs. Mannering did not observe how dark it was outside, or that the clouds that had been gathering in the sky since sunset had begun to descend in heavy soaking rain.

Harry was the first person who noticed the rain, when, on finishing his exercise, he ran down-stairs to rest himself with a good run in the open air.

"Why, hollo! how dark it is," he said. "They ought all to be home long before this. I wonder I don't see anybody."

He ran back into the house and took a rapid tour through the rooms, startling Mrs. Mannering by poking his face into the dining-room, and shutting the door again without speaking; then, as a sort of safety-valve for his surprise and perplexity, he ran bare-headed across the lawn to the entrance gate, and stared vacantly out through the bars into the road.

"Has any one come down the mountain road, Mrs. Jones?" he asked of the woman at the lodge, who just then came to her door.

"No, sir. I'm looking out for my son Owen. His uncle Griffiths had to go into the town for an hour, and asked Owen to watch the telegraph till he got back."

"Here he is," cried Harry, "cutting along the road at a wonderful rate. Ho! I say that's not Owen; it's Griffiths himself. What can be the matter?"

Mrs. Jones, not less agitated than Harry, threw open the gate, and they both rushed out to meet the man, Mrs. Jones asking for Owen, and Harry inquiring anxiously if Griffiths had seen Mr. Ward.

Griffiths was in a decidedly sullen humour, and it was some time before he could be persuaded to answer either question.

"He would teach Owen," he assured Mrs. Jones, "to slip away from the telegraph house when he was set to guard it, and lock the door to keep him out, and run away with the key."

"But the key was in the lock," said Harry; "you had nothing to do but turn it."

"Was it?" said Griffiths. "He wished Master Mannering would find it for him then. And how should the key be *in* the lock? He had left it safe on its proper nail, and it could not have got to the door without hands."

Mrs. Owen broke from bad English into fluent Welsh in defence of her son, and Harry had to wait full five minutes before he could get either of them to listen to his story. Neither did Griffiths, when at last he understood what Harry was saying, seem in any hurry to do anything or suggest any remedy for the disaster. The key was gone for certain, he said, and could not be found in the dark, and there was no possibility of bringing any one up the mountains from Caergebi to pick the lock till morning, so they must all just make the best of a bad job.

In despair Harry ran back to the house faster than he had left it. Mrs. Mannering, Magda, Alice, mademoiselle, all the servants, were

assembled in the hall when he entered, and each person seemed to have returned from an unsuccessful search through the house for someone who was missing. Mademoiselle immediately pounced upon Harry and dragged him forward into the midst of the assembly.

"Here is one of them at last!" she cried. "Now shall we hear a sthoroughly account. Dear Mrs. Mannering cheer yourself. You shall see how comfortable all is. Now, Master Mannering, if you please. Mr. Ward, Master Hugh, Miss Kathleen, Master Tommy, Master Arthur, where shall they all be—say?"

"Are not any of them come home?" cried Harry, aghast.

"Be quick! Where did you leave them, and why, Harry?" Mrs. Mannering said in such a quavering voice that Harry could hardly command his to answer.

He tried to make his story as little alarming as possible; but even to his own ears it sounded uncomfortable enough, and when his mother repeated after him:

"You left Ratcliffe in a boat which he did not know how to manage, and the other children on the beach, three miles from home! Oh, Harry! and I always thought I might trust you," he felt as if he should never be happy again.

To complete his punishment, his mother, after despatching the servants in different directions to search about the wood and on the mountain, set out herself, accompanied by mademoiselle and one of the gardeners, to walk to the shore, while she desired him to remain at home in so stern a voice that he dared not venture on a remonstrance.

CHAPTER XV.

KATHLEEN, Tommy, and Arthur stood with dismayed faces, watching the boat as it disappeared behind the rocky peak.

"I do think it is too bad of them to leave us in such a plight," sighed Kathleen. "I'm sure we shall never find Tommy's clothes, for we did look carefully for them; and how are we ever to get him home? That horrid shrimp sack is torn at the bottom, and his feet are coming out of it already."

"He will get on much quicker now his feet have come through the sack," said Arthur; "but it's no joke walking across the thistly part of the common barefoot. I am afraid you will have to do it, though,

Tommy, if we can't find your shoes. We might take it in turns. You shall go on till your feet begin to bleed, and then you shall have my shoes and stockings for a bit."

Tommy set up a howl at this suggestion, threw himself on the sand, and protested that nothing should make him walk home barefoot. He would lie just where he was and be drowned, he had a great deal rather.

"You don't know what being drowned is like," said Arthur; and then he sat down on a stone and proceeded to give a minute description of the uncomfortable sensations drowning people are supposed to experience. Kathleen every now and then broke in with an expostulatory "You would not like to feel so, now would you, Tommy?" but Tommy only twisted his shoulders, and obstinately refused to take any steps to avert the fate Arthur pictured so vividly.

"I wonder whether the tide is ebbing or flowing," said Arthur, at last. "Harry may not have thought it safe to row round the peak with an ebbing tide—perhaps he and Ratty have gone home across the mountain. I don't think there is any use in our waiting longer: we had better try to get home. Now, Tommy, do make the best of it. It can't hurt you to walk on the sand, and I will lend you my shoes by-and-by."

Tommy soon contrived to find a stone sharp enough to cut his foot, and was so doleful over his misfortune that Arthur and Kathleen offered to carry him at least part of the way.

As soon as they had climbed the ridge they mounted him on their crossed arms and toiled over the broken ground of the common for a few hundred yards, when Kathleen's foot caught in a rabbit-hole, and over the three rolled into a furzy hollow, from which they scrambled with difficulty, leaving Kathleen's hat and part of her frock behind them.

Tommy, who was much shaken by the fall, refused to be carried again, and made such a fuss about the pain of walking among the furze that Arthur was moved to give him his shoes at once and go barefoot himself. After this change they got on faster, but Tommy was so occupied in holding on Arthur's shoes, which were too large for him, Arthur so intent on bearing the pain of the thistle pricks bravely, and Kathleen so busy choosing the smoothest paths for him to walk in, that no one paid particular attention to the direction in which they went, and all were agreeably surprised when they reached a green gate leading into a wood.

"This is the same gate we came out at, I suppose," said Arthur. "It can't be the gate into the Boddisgathlyn woods."

Kathleen knew nothing about the Boddisgathlyn woods, and felt so sure that they were in the right way, that they followed the most likely looking path through the wood without misgiving. At last they came to a point where three roads met.

"I wonder which path will take us home," said Arthur; "how puzzling! This is like the place where the wicked brothers in the 'Little Woodman' left William to be eaten by wolves—an opening in a wood where three ways met!"

"It's the very place," cried Tommy, beginning to dance about with terror. "And there, in that dark part, I see the wolves' eyes glaring at us!"

"Oh, Tommy, how can you be so silly! You are kicking off Arthur's shoes," cried Kathleen; but Tommy, who had been growing every minute more terrified at the increasing darkness, was now in a wild state, which no reasoning could calm. He kicked Arthur's shoes away into the fern, and then threw himself on the wet path and rolled till his clothes, face, and hands were coated with mud. The rain now began to pour in torrents, and the children were in despair—when Kathleen heard the sound of wheels approaching at some distance from where they stood, and, breaking through ferns and brushwood, she emerged on to a broad road just as a dog-cart, with two men in it, was passing.

"Oh! please," cried Kathleen, throwing herself in the way, "we've lost ourselves. Do stop and help us!"

The person driving had some difficulty in pulling up, and spoke sharply.

"You should never run out before a horse's head in that way, little girl. You were nearly run over."

"Oh! but please," said Kathleen, "we've lost ourselves, and it's raining."

"No doubt of that," said the gentleman, "and I'm in far too great a hurry to be glad to find you; however, jump in—I'll take you out of the wood."

"Tommy and Arthur, too?" said Kathleen; "here they are!" for, guided by the sound of voices, Arthur had by this time made his way to the road, dragging Tommy after him.

"Be quick, then; the horse won't stand!" the gentleman said; and, leaning down, he hoisted them into the carriage one after the other, threw a rug over them, and drove on at a brisk pace.

[*To be continued.*]

RINGING THE NEW YEAR IN.

I WAS a very little fellow; but old Tom Boots, my father's gardener, promised to take great care of me, so I obtained leave to see the old year rung out and the new one in.

Have you ever been in a belfry? I was awfully impressed with the place. Through the dark cold churchyard, by the light of a stable lantern, I plodded beside old Tom, as the clock was chiming half-past eleven. The gaunt gravestones stood high up in our path, and occasionally we ran against them, and I clung closer to Tom. The lantern cast a vague uncertain column of light before us, revealing patches of snow here and there, which had drifted upon the grassy mounds, making the shadows darker and more mysterious.

By-and-by, we stood beneath the great black tower, and there found a little door ajar.

"Now, my boy, mount first, and I'll hold the light," said Tom, and I entered the portal. Up, up, up, step by step, I ascended the narrow winding path, saluted here and there by cold gushes of wind, which came through ancient chinks and crevices. I wished myself at home more than once, but I was very glad to be in the belfry when I reached it. A flood of light came out from the open door, and played about the big black beams of oak and the blocks of mossy mouldering stones.

It was not a large room, but it seemed to be full of nooks and corners and shadowy places. There was a bright fire burning on the hearth, and candles stuck here and there in sconces. Seven or eight men were seated near the fire drinking smoking ale, and "ginger was hot i' the mouth;" for I remember it, even now.

The long ropes hung from the mysterious ceiling, and there were blocks of wood with straps for the 'ringers' feet beneath. Without these, the men might have been pulled up to the ceiling by the revolving wheels attached to the great bells. I was assured that the biggest of the eight would carry a little chap like me right away, and send me flying up into the steeple.

I shall never forget the peculiar, indescribable thrill which passed



RINGING THE NEW YEAR IN.

through my boyish heart when George Atkins, the blacksmith, began to toll the "passing bell" for the dying year. I heard the same bell moaning and sighing when Arthur Jones, my little schoolfellow, was drowned, and now it was tolling out the old year. "Good bye, dear old year," I said to myself, "good bye, I am very sorry you are obliged to go; you have been very kind to me," and the great bell sobbed in the steeple, as if it were sorry too. Then, just as Tom Boots's big silver watch, which hung over the fire-place, pointed to five minutes to twelve, all the ringers stood up and rubbed their hands and got into their places. Old Tom gave me his coat to sit upon, by the fire, and I waited, quietly watching the ringers, and listening for the quarters.

It seemed quite an age, those few minutes! The log on the fire spluttered and sent a cloud of sparks up the chimney, and shadows of the bell-ringers started up on the walls and disappeared in the intricacies of the roof. At last the church clock began to beat out the hour. The old year, with all his hopes and fears, his evil doings and his good deeds, his happinesses and miseries, was breathing his last. I could have fancied I saw the old man in his big hood, tottering on the brink of the grave. And oh! how I vowed, in my own mind, to be good, and have nothing to repent of when the next old year came round. That quarrel with Peter Smith—I would make friends with him on the very next day. Aunt Judy should have no more complaints to make about the sugar, nor about being late for school, and forgetting her kind advice. Oh, I would be such a good fellow!

And then, all of a sudden, the bells commenced to ring the new year in. Arthur Peters began to pull his rope first, and then Dick Jones pulled his, and then Harry, the joiner, pulled his; and so they went on, until George Atkins pulled the great rope with the fur at the end. At first, the bells only seemed to chime, but gradually the whole peal joined in the joyous music, and rung in the glorious new year. How the rafters vibrated, and the floor! The whole place shook, as if in sympathy, and the ropes went up and down, accompanied by dancing shadows on the wall. The candles flickered in the sconces, and the wicks snuffed themselves. The crazy door shook, and the fire spluttered again, and flickered gleams of light on the earnest faces of the ringers. Above, below, and on every side, the bell-music encompassed us, peal after peal running into each other, and mingling in a chaos of

harmonies that wandered about the tower, and rushed out at the doorway, and through the chinks and windows into the black winter night.

The bells had not rung many minutes, as it seemed to me, before Arthur Jones peeped in at the door and beckoned me. I knew Arthur was drowned, but that did not occur to me at the time. I quickly slipped out and followed him, and he took my hand in silence. Suddenly, we entered a wonderful palace, and then a beautiful garden, and I felt so light, and joyous, and happy, that I seemed to walk on air. There were beautiful trees, and running brooks, and mossy banks covered with the most charming flowers. And there were birds of exquisite plumage flying about, and allowing themselves to be fondled by children, who were making garlands of flowers, and sailing in little boats on golden lakes. And there was a rainbow in the sky, and the sun was shining through it, making streaks of moving coloured light upon the velvety walks.

"Where are we?" I said to Arthur Jones, who was leading me by the hand.

"This is the good boy's heaven," he said.

Just then, a group of little girls with golden hair, and boys with naked feet, caught us in a garland and brought us to a fountain, where lambs and kids were playing together, and swans, with children on their backs, were swimming to and fro.

I was so happy, that I hardly knew how to contain myself, until, at length, Arthur brought me to a dark glen, and there bade me look into a dim glass, and my heart sank within me.

I saw my own little bedroom and myself, pale and haggard, lying upon the pillows. My mother and Aunt Judy were by the bedside, weeping bitterly, and praying that heaven would spare their darling boy.

"This will be your home, this beautiful boy's heaven, if you die, because you have repented of your sins, and vowed in your heart to be good. Would you rather be here, or with your mother and Aunt Judy?" said Arthur, in a quiet solemn manner.

"Heaven is so beautiful, and such a happy place," I said; but my mother's voice seemed to come faintly upon the breeze at the moment, and I cried out "Oh, my mother! my mother!" for it grieved me to see her weep, and I longed to throw my arms round her neck and comfort her.

And then, all in a moment, I looked up, and I was really at home and in bed, and my mother was by my side.

"Oh, dear, dear mother! I am so glad to be with you again, although heaven is so beautiful; I will go there some day, I hope."

My mother cried, and kissed me, and so did Aunt Judy; and then I gradually learnt that I was recovering from a serious illness. Old Tom Boots ought not to have let me go to sleep in the belfry upon his damp great coat. He had to carry me home in a state of unconsciousness, and I never remembered anything but the bell-ringing, and Arthur Jones beckoning me away, although the new year was fourteen days old when my mother's kisses awoke me. I told her all about my thoughts in the belfry, and she said she had no doubt that the angels had been kind to me, because of my good intentions.

"And oh, mother! how good the angels were to let me know that you were crying and praying for me," I said; "I could not bear to see you weep, or perhaps I might have stayed with Arthur Jones, for next to seeing you happy, mother, would be to live in heaven."

And so the mother's prayer and the son's affection saved the boy's life, and made a whole household happy for years to come.

Many an old year has departed since then, and I have heard the same old bells ring other new years into power; but old Tom Boots, and Arthur Peters, and George Atkinson, are sleeping quietly in the shadow of the tower, and somebody has beckoned my mother away also to the good mother's heaven, where I trust she looks down on me sometimes in the lonely watches of the night, in my poverty and in my riches.

The bells ring out as of yore, notwithstanding. But I have never been in the belfry since that December night when I was a boy. It is enough that I sit by my own fireside, and think of the year that is gone, and pray that *my* son may love *his* mother, as that little boy loved her whose prayer restored him to the world, that he might be a comfort and a solace to others.

JOSEPH HATTON.

THE PRINCE OF SLEONA.

Book III.

CHAPTER III.

ISLAND HOSPITALITY.

AS soon as the song was done, the king, leaving his post of observation at the window, proceeded hastily to the door of the dwelling, and entered without ceremony. The singer, surprised at the sight of a stranger, would have risen to receive him, but he prevented her, telling her that he had been induced to pause, as he descended the hill, to listen to her song, and that as he was a stranger and benighted, he ventured to hope for hospitality for the night, and that he might hear something more of a voice so lovely. She replied, that he was welcome to rest, at all events for a short time, until her brothers and father should come home from fishing, which would probably be soon, and that as regarded the song he had noticed, she had only been singing to her little nephew, had no idea that anyone had listened, and knew well that he was pleased to flatter.

It surprised him somewhat to find in the fisher maiden a refinement of manners and a purity of dialect which would have well suited a girl of the highest class; she spoke simply and sincerely—looking at the stranger with clear and truthful eyes. Her features were not regular, and her face had a settled and habitual expression, which was not sadness, but something near akin. But yet the king thought he had never seen a face so pleasing to look upon, and when she smiled upon the child (who held out his arms to her and crowed), it beamed with an inner light, and became beautiful.

She presently rose up to cross the room (to bring her visitor a bowl of refreshment), and, then, alas, the king saw that she was quite lame! He hastened to take the bowl from her hands, and quickly bringing forward the low chair on which she had been sitting, made her sit down again, and all with so much kindness and gentleness that a sudden glow of pleasure shot through her, and brought the colour for a moment to her pale cheek.

"And how did you learn that song?" the king asked of her. "It is known pretty well in Sleona, but I marvel that it has crossed the sea to you."

"That is our dear king's song," she answered, "as you know well. I sing it often to the child when his father is at sea; the poor boy has no mother now—indeed, he has scarcely had a mother—for I have been the only mother he has known. Ah! you do not suppose, in Sleona, that, though we are at a distance and the waves flow between us, we do not love and prize our beloved king?"

"Your king, I fancy, scarce knows whether it is so or no. He has somewhat neglected this part of his dominions, but he will soon know how devoted and loyal his subjects here in truth are."

"Ah! you will tell him! But take care. You are, I suppose, some great man, and powerful at court; and if so, caution him, I pray you, never to come to these islands. Though it would gladden *my* heart to see him, he must not come, for he never would leave these shores alive. Ah! believe me, I know the people. They are tigers, in their blind thirst for blood and booty; and, blind to the retribution which would come upon them so quickly,—for the people of Sleona would, doubtless, exterminate them,—they would sacrifice him and all his retinue, and seize and sack his vessels."

"But they do not sacrifice *me*, nor seize and sack *my* vessel."

"Ah! but you do not know; you have but just landed; they scarcely know of your coming. Hear me," and she took his hands in hers, and gazed in his face earnestly. "You are so unlike every one I have ever seen; your voice is rich and gentle; though your face is sad, your eyes are kind: and, I *think* it must have been in dreams, but I *have* seen your face before. Ah! go from this place as soon as you can reach your boat; go quickly—set sail, and tell the king never, never to trust himself here."

"You strange girl," said the king, much astonished; "I *do* thank you for your kind counsel, and since you tell me your people are so wild and bloodthirsty—well, I will go soon—but not till day comes; at all events I am safe *here* for the night, for your brothers will not harm me, and I must talk more with *you*. Tell me more about what you said, that you had seen my face before—in dreams, you thought."

"Oh! I do not know, I cannot tell. I thought when you came in first, and I looked up at you, 'Who is he? I have seen him before;

and then I felt it could not be so, for it is only by having seen a picture my father brought from Sleona that I knew you were dressed in the Sleona dress, and your face is not at all the face of that picture, and I have never been in Sleona, so it *must* have been in a dream that I have seen you, for I *have* seen you, I know."

"Well, you will tell me one day, when you remember. But now you will sing, will you not? I would fain hear your voice again."

But she would not sing, averring that she knew no songs—could not sing when she knew she was listened to—making many other excuses. And he did not continue to bid her, seeing she was not willing. And presently her brothers came up the hill, singing a measured tramp-chorus as they carried nets and fishes, slung on poles on their shoulders, and they came noisily into the room, dropping their burdens about the door; not seeing the king at first, in the darkness, and chiding their sister for having no light.

"Why, Vela, you and Tarshan have both been asleep, it seems," cried out the boy's father, taking up the child, who woke at his voice. "Strike us a light, quick, and mind we've eaten nothing since dawn." He spoke roughly, yet with an inflection of kindness in his voice; and the girl hurriedly struck a light, limping as she moved about, in a manner which pained the king to see. He, for his part, remained silent and motionless where he stood; he had risen when the men came in, and, in spite of himself, his hand grasped the hilt of his dagger, for after what the girl had said, he thought it well to be on his guard.

When the light at length displayed him, a sudden silence fell upon all present—the brothers, pausing for a moment at their different occupations, cast upon him looks, at first of unmixed astonishment, but, afterwards, gradually mixed with sullenness in some, ferocity in others, cupidity in others (there were seven brothers); then they looked from the king to their sister,—who stood motionless like the others, her eyes moving rapidly and anxiously from one face to another, and back to the king,—and then one at another again. After a pause, the brother, who seemed the eldest (the father of the boy), moved forward and said, not altogether uncourteously: "What is your pleasure?"

And the king replied: "I am, as you may see, a traveller from Sleona. As I came down from the mountain, the evening fell, and, passing this dwelling, I heard this maiden's voice singing a song I knew, and singing it so marvellously, that I must needs pause to listen.

So, having listened, I made bold to enter; and, as it is night, and my vessel lies some distance out at sea, I would ask that I may be suffered to remain here till morning."

As the king alluded to "his vessel at some distance at sea," rapid glances were exchanged between the brothers, and a second came forward to speak, but the elder motioned him to silence with his hand, and went on to say:

"We are not, as the people of Sleona—we are not the marvels of the world for wealth, cultivation, uprightness; the good King Loroio, whose subjects we are, does nothing for *us*: nevertheless, we can be hospitable to strangers. This house, and all it contains, are yours till morning!"

Then all the brethren resumed their avocations, suspended during this brief colloquy—some piling nets in the corners, some spreading those which were wet on the ground outside, some stringing fish and hanging them on the outer wall, some chopping wood for the fire.

And the maiden Vela sat in a corner, in her low chair, ostensibly watching a pot in which food was being cooked on the fire. She sat with her eyes fixed on the ground, her head in her hand, her elbow on her knee, slowly rocking herself with an unconscious motion which seemed habitual to her, and expressive of mental anxiety or pain. The king would have spoken with her, but she had partly turned her back upon him, and seemed immersed in her own thoughts. Also he did not altogether feel sufficiently at his ease, as there was always at least one brother with his bright eyes fixed on him; however much the brothers came and went, the eyes of at least one were sure to be bent upon him with a searching glance. The child slept. All was profound silence. The king was gazing into the fire; and just, as for a moment, he had all but forgotten his position, the girl Vela brushed his ear with her lips, as she hurriedly whispered:

"Be on your guard!"

At that moment all the brothers were, as it happened, outside. It appeared she had watched for the moment that she might give him the caution; and scarcely was it given, when two brothers entered hurriedly—in time to see her seat herself. The king saw them glance from himself to her, and then at each other.

They came forward, and seated themselves by the fire, the one on his right hand, the other on his left (between him and Vela).

"That is your yacht, then, anchored off the point?" said the one on the right, the same who had tried to interrupt his elder brother. "A lovely model; a Tama-built craft, one would say, not that *I* know much of the matter, only old Lano, who has been there two voyages, told me so. *He* said she was the king's own yacht."

"She *is* Tama-built," the king said; to the latter part of the speech he did not consider himself bound to reply for the present.

"And are you come here to trade?" said the speaker (whom we may call the second brother). "Not very likely, though. Plenty of fish nearer home. Nothing else to be got *here*. Ha, ha!"

"No, no," said the third brother: "nothing else here; nothing else here,—ha, ha!" He spoke in a tone of (apparently) feigned *bonhomie*; and went on repeating: "Nothing else here," in a voice which became fainter, and at a rate which became slower with each repetition, until, suddenly pausing, he said, sharply and clearly: "You have a fine dagger there," at the same time placing his hand upon the hilt (of curiously-fashioned steel, not particularly rich in appearance) of that which Loroio bore at his girdle.

It almost needed the lightning glance of warning which Vela darted at him, to arouse him to his danger—for danger he saw it was; the action of the man was so sudden and unexpected—the transition from the drawling inanity of his "nothing else here," so sharp and startling. The king never lost presence of mind; he courteously withdrew the man's fingers from the hilt, and saying, "Let me bring it to the light; you will see its workmanship better," he drew it himself and exhibited it to his interlocutor.

The man appeared disconcerted for a moment, but speedily resumed his first manner. He felt the edge of the weapon, saying, in his drawling voice: "Pretty sharp—pretty sharp. *Seems* pretty sharp—yes, yes—sharp!"

"Be careful how you feel the edge," said Loroio, "because it is poisoned, and if it should break your skin, no art could cure you."

"Ha!" said the man, somewhat grimly, and let it alone.

Then there followed a brief silence, until Vela put on the table the food which had been prepared, and the brothers, coming in, sat down to eat. The king was placed nearest to the fire, in the place of honour. Opposite to him sat Vela, who served out the food to each. It was eaten in silence. The appetites of the brethren were robust; the king,

too, was hungry, and found the viands palatable. Vela alone did not eat, but served the others.

Midway in the repast, the fourth brother (who was a humpback, having the strange and somewhat weird cast of features often found in persons similarly formed) left the table, and went into an inner room, from whence he returned before long, bearing in both hands an ancient silver goblet, of rich workmanship, filled with foaming wine. Coming round between the king and Vela, he made an obsequious reverence, and, holding out the goblet to the guest, he said: "This is our island wine, and you can scarce have tasted it in Sleona: we make so little that we use it all at home. Try it, noble sir; you will find it good and inspiring."

Vela raised her eyes rapidly to the king's, but he did not see her; his eyes were fixed on the goblet, admiring its beautiful workmanship, as he marvelled that such a work of art should be found in such a place. His hand was stretched out to take it, when Vela rose suddenly up, and with a cry of "See, see! a burning ship!" pointed out to sea with one hand, at the same time sharply throwing her whole weight on that arm of her humpbacked brother which held the goblet; the shock caused him to drop the cup, and its contents were spilt, chiefly into the fire.

Every one started up, and looked towards the sea. There was a reddish light visible indeed, but in a few moments it was manifest that it was nothing but the full moon rising out of the sea haze which veiled the horizon.

There was a general chorus of indignation at her folly, as places were resumed again, and the humpbacked brother grumbled deeper maledictions as he stooped to pick up the now empty goblet. The fluid which had fallen into the fire seethed and sputtered still, as no wine ever did. The king saw this, and thanked Vela by a grateful glance.

"Nay, think not of it," he said, gaily. "I should have drunk more deeply of your wine than is my custom. I am a water-drinker for the most part, and will do as I do at home." Saying which, he helped himself to fair water from an earthen pitcher.

When the repast was over, the brothers all withdrew into the open air, save one, who remained as if to keep watch upon Vela and the guest, and prevent their conversing, and who was from time to time relieved by one of the others. There was an ominous silence, like that

which precedes a thunderstorm. The men talked in whispers. Vela sat, as before, at work, silently rocking herself. The position became irksome to the king, who would gladly have extricated himself from it, had he known how to do so. Danger, and that of no contemptible kind, was evidently around him, and might burst upon him at any instant. The silence was now profound; the men had ceased to whisper; the clicking of Vela's needles sounded loud in the quiet; insects chirping outside among the leaves, distant voices hailing in vessels out at sea, the rush of the waterfall,—all seemed to deepen the hush. The moon was getting high, and threw her rays in at the window; the child, dreaming, smiled in his sleep. At length, Vela dropped one of her needles, and the king stooped to pick it up.

At that instant all the brothers, dashing in at the open door, rushed upon him at once, and overpowered him. Muscular and active as he was, he could not have withstood their united attack, but the unexpectedness of their onset quite precluded him from attempting any resistance. His arms and legs were held, were pinioned,—he was thrown to the ground—his poisoned dagger was drawn by a ruthless hand, raised in air, and pointed at his throat.

Before the blow could fall, Vela precipitated herself upon him, overturning as she did so the table, and extinguishing the lamp. She uttered no cry; but seizing the arm that held the dagger, she clung to it with all her force.

"You will kill *me first*," she said.

The king struggled now, but could not burst his bonds.

"Take the girl out," the brothers who were in the background cried. "Shake her off! do her a mischief! Here, give her to *us*!"

They were pressing forward to seize her, and free their brother, to whose arm she clung in such a manner that he could not strike the king, and he could not bring himself to wound her, when a commanding voice sounded above the *melée*; ringing out in tones accustomed to be heard above the storm and tempest, it thundered forth:

"Hold! if you value your lives."

"Ah, father!" cried Vela, in accents of wild joy. "It is you?—then he is saved!" And the others, muttering, "Father! already!" stood, and slunk away, like beaten curs.

The father, and master of this lawless household, lost no time in relighting the extinguished lamp, and restoring order to the apartment.

The king recognised him instantly. He was the fisher who had presented the ring at his coronation; he placed his finger on his lip, to indicate that he commanded silence as to his real dignity. The fisher touched his forehead in reverential acquiescence. The king, when Vela and the old man had untied his bonds, thanked them gratefully, and prepared to take his leave without delay. To the old man he explained that his intention had been to remain till the morning, but, he added, with a smile, that his reception had not been sufficiently reassuring to warrant his carrying out that intention. The old fisher scarcely spoke, but busied himself in facilitating his guest's departure, saying he would himself conduct him to the beach. To this he would take no denial, so the king was fain to consent.

Vela was now sitting with the child in her arms. The *fracas* had aroused the boy, but he had sobbed himself to sleep now that she had taken him. The king went to her, bent down and kissed the child. She never raised her eyes, or looked upon him.

"You, noble girl," he said to her, "are enshrined in my heart for ever. Three times this night have you saved my life—"

"Hush, hush, for Heaven's dear sake! begone—now—this instant—without a moment's delay!" she broke in; and more in obedience to her earnestness, than for any other reason, he hurried away, and began to descend the hill with the old fisher.

About half-way down the descent, he looked back at the open window of the house, and could see that Vela was looking out after them eagerly, her golden hair gleaming in the light of the lamp. As he looked, another figure came to the window, and seemed to look out eagerly, too. Suddenly he perceived that Vela struck up the arm of this figure (one of the brothers), and the next instant a large arrow whistled through the air a few feet above his head. But Vela and the figure disappeared instantaneously from the casement, and through the still air came the sound of loud and piercing shrieks, unmistakably uttered by the girl.

A. E.

[To be continued.]

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ROBIN.

THE first Christmas which Annie Cameron and Lucy Wenham had spent in England was gloomy, mild, and wet; but the next December 25th was a thoroughly old-fashioned Christmas Day. The snow lay on the ground, and the trees were covered with rime; the air was sharp and invigorating, but without wind to break its stillness; it was a perfect winter's scene, the sun looking red in the mist through which it was fast breaking.

"What are you looking at?" asked Miss Gordon, coming into the room before breakfast; "and why is the window open? My dear Annie, you will catch cold."

"Oh, I have a shawl round me, thank you, dear Miss Gordon, and we must just finish giving our feathered family their Christmas treat. Cook has saved some scraps of fat for them, and they do so enjoy it. Do come and look at them, there are at least a dozen sparrows, two or three tomtits, and Bobby; my pet Bobby—bold fellow!—he knows we are his friends; he is not a bit afraid of us; he is coming nearer and nearer; here he is on the window-ledge; I do believe he will come into the room some day."

"Aren't you fond of robins, Aunt Janet," said Mary; "they are so trustful and patient, and so merry with all their hardships. Oh! I do so love robins!"

Miss Gordon smiled. "So do I, Mary; but I know where that character of Bobby came from."

"Well, dear Miss Gordon," interposed Annie, "so do I; but Mrs. Gatty *does* make one love the robin. While I was in India I often longed to see one; and since I have been in England I have never heard or seen one without thinking of 'Daily Bread.' Now you are not going to be cruel, and to tell us that it is a poetical character, and that he does not deserve it, are you?"

"Oh, no; for his merry song all through the winter ought to cheer



THE ROBIN.

us, and teach us to be trustful, and his confiding ways are very pleasant; he is quite a sociable bird and loves mankind, so I am sure we may love him. But as regards *patience*, my dear Annie, I'm afraid we cannot attribute that quality to him, for the robin is one of the most pugnacious of birds, and does not at all like to be kept waiting. I will tell you more about him another day. You really must shut the window, and come to breakfast, or we shall be late for the morning service."

A fresh fall of snow kept them in-doors all the next day, and they eagerly claimed Miss Gordon's promised account of the robin. They wanted to know if he was valued in the same way in other countries as in England.

"The men at the farm," said Mary, "never kill a robin, though they are rather fond of bird-catching in general, I am afraid, and wage war against the sparrows cruelly."

"They have a mistaken notion of the mischief that sparrows do," said Miss Gordon. "No doubt they do destroy a good many seeds, but this is more than counterbalanced by the service they do to farmers by ridding them of the quantities of grubs and insects that would feed upon the corn else. Sparrows feed their young almost entirely upon these. I am afraid to say how many caterpillars a pair have been known to convey to their nests in a day; about 600, I believe."

"Do tell the farmer this, Mary," said Lucy, "and beg him to stop the men from destroying the poor sparrows; they won't harm the robins, I know."

"The robin is a privileged bird," said Miss Gordon; "I believe even Cockney sportsmen spare him, and he has a pet name in many other countries as well as in England. In Sweden he is called *Tommi Liden*; in Norway, *Peter Ronsmed*; in Germany, *Thomas Gierdet*."

"Did you not say that Shakespeare mentions the robin, Miss Gordon?"

"Yes; he calls him the *ruddock*, probably a corruption of red-cock; and other old writers speak of him as *Robinet*. All allude to the tradition of our nursery ballads, of his charity towards 'the friendless bodies of unburied men.'"

"I wonder how that tradition sprung up?" said Annie.

"Tradition!" said Mary. "Why it's quite true, of course."

"What's quite true?" asked Lucy.

"About the robins burying the poor babes in the wood," said Mary. "Oh, I wouldn't doubt it for the world. Say it's true, Auntie—do!"

"I'm afraid I can't do that, Mary," said Miss Gordon, laughing at her eagerness.

"Well then, say it may be true; it's not impossible, surely, that they should have covered them over with leaves."

"I should rather think that the bird's habit of covering its nest with withered leaves in order to conceal it, gave rise to the legend. There is a more solemn one told by the Irish, which makes them look upon him as a sacred bird:—That during the solemn hours of darkness which prevailed during our Lord's crucifixion, a robin sat constantly on the cross; and that his red breast was given to him in remembrance of this.

"In Brittany, the legend is, that the robin plucked a thorn from His crown, which, piercing its breast, 'dyed it red.' Perhaps the like legends prevail in northern countries about the robin; he is held in respect there universally.

"In the South, the feeling about him does not seem to exist; and in Greece and Italy these little birds are killed and eaten without scruple, and baskets full of them are exposed for sale in the markets."

"We don't see much of Bobby in the summer," said Mary.

"No; he grows more sociable when autumn is getting dreary, and winter nearer at hand. Have you observed, Mary, how different his song is at different times of the year?"

"No, Aunt Janet; is it?"

"In spring and summer his notes are clear and liquid; in autumn, sweet and plaintive; and in winter, abrupt and chirping."

"Does he feed on insects?"

"Yes, he is a great devourer of insects and worms."

"Well, the gardeners and farmers, too, should encourage him," said Lucy.

"Yes, he is useful on that account; but I am afraid he would not refuse seeds, fruits, or berries, if they came in his way."

"He lives upon hips and haws in the winter?"

"Yes, nothing comes amiss to him; and you know how fond he is of crumbs of bread, and potatoe, and fat."

"Fanny Jones showed me a robin's nest, one day," said Lucy, "in

a pile of faggot-wood, made of moss, dried leaves, and grass, and lined with cowhair. There were six or seven dull white eggs, with red spots, in it."

"The robin uses various materials for the nest," said Miss Gordon; "hay, straw, wool, and even cloth, linen, paper, and bits of Berlin wool, have been found worked into their nests."

The girls laughed; and Mary proposed to leave some ends of gay-coloured wool within Bobby's reach, when the time came for the nest building.

"Robins are early builders," said Miss Gordon; "finished nests have been found in January and February, and two or three broods are reared in a year. The young birds are greyish brown, speckled, and do not get their red breast till autumn. They generally build near the ground, at the bottom of an old hedge, in a hole in an old wall, or, as Jane says, in a pile of faggot-wood; but sometimes they will come nearer to us, and build in greenhouses or sitting-rooms."

"Oh! I wish Bobby would build in this room," exclaimed Mary; "how delightful it would be. Did you ever know of a robin's nest in a room, Auntie?"

"Oh, yes; a pair once began a nest in a myrtle in the hall of a house in Hampshire. This being removed, they began another in the cornice of the drawing-room, and when this was taken away, they established themselves in a dressing-room, and built their nest in an old shoe."

"What fun!" exclaimed Mary; "and were the eggs laid in the shoe?"

"Yes, and, in due time, hatched; and the old birds went in and out of the window of the room to carry food to their young."

"Were they not afraid of the owner of the room?"

"Not at all; they would sometimes perch on his looking-glass whilst he was shaving!"

"Well, that was bold," said Annie.

"A still bolder pair built their nest in a pigeon-hole book-shelf in a school frequented by seventy children, and fed their young regularly in school-time.

"Another pair built in a hollow place under the Bible in the reading-desk of the church of Collingbourne-Kingston, in Wiltshire, in 1834, and there they hatched six young ones, and the cock

bird used to bring food in his bill and feed them whilst Divine service was going on. The same thing occurred at Hampton Church, in Warwickshire, where a pair of robins built their nest in a church Bible, as it lay on the reading-desk; and another pair built in a pew of the church at Burton-on-Trent."

"Robins seem to have a partiality for building in churches," said Annie.

"I have seen one very often in the Old Priory Church, at Malvern," said Miss Gordon, "fitting over the heads of the congregation, and perched upon the organ; and I have heard that the cathedral at Worcester was visited for many succeeding years by a robin, and that his warbling was often heard when there was a pause in the service. The congregation were very sorry when his visits ceased; and some time afterwards, when the organ was repaired, the skeleton of the poor little bird was found in one of the pipes.

"An interesting story is told of a robin who built its nest in a waggon in a shed at Walton Heath. Just as the young birds were hatched, the waggon was sent, packed with sundry hampers and boxes, to Worthing; and the old bird sat upon its nest during the whole journey, only flying off to the nearest hedge for food for them from time to time: the waggon was unpacked without doing any mischief to the nest, and the whole party returned in safety to Walton Heath, having travelled no less than a hundred miles."

"Is there not an American robin?" asked Annie.

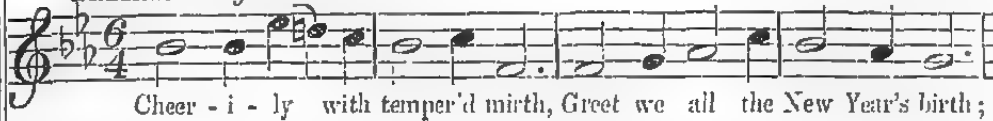
"There is a bird so called," said Miss Gordon; "but it is not of the same species. Our robin is known all over Europe, in Asia Minor, and in the northern parts of Africa, but not in America, and its namesake is a much larger bird, and does not resemble it at all. American writers speak with great delight of their first introduction to the little English robin 'renowned in song and story.'"

C. E. D.

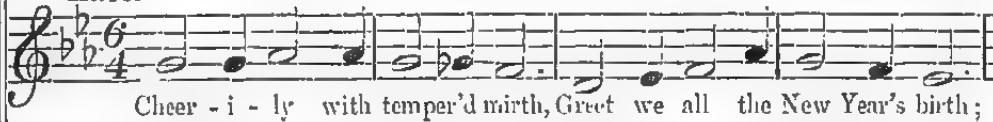
A New Year's Carol.

Words and Music by EDWARD GREATORREX.

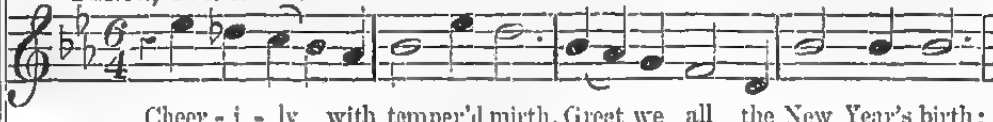
TREBLE. *Allegro Moderato.*



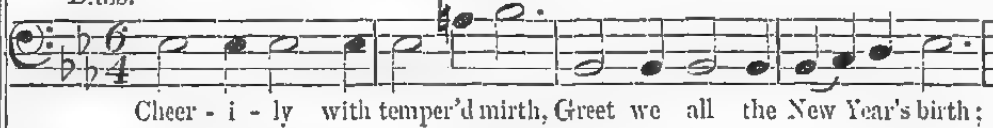
ALTO.



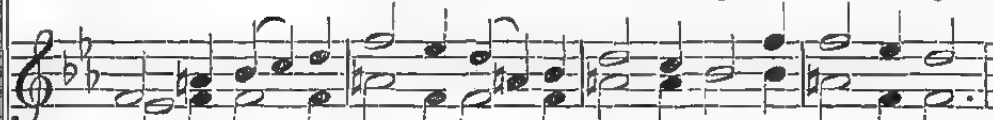
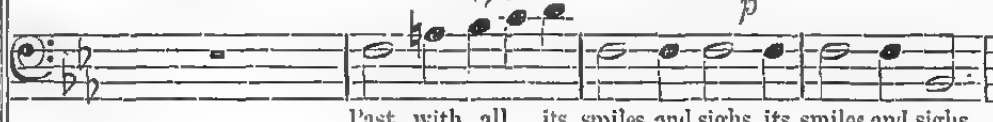
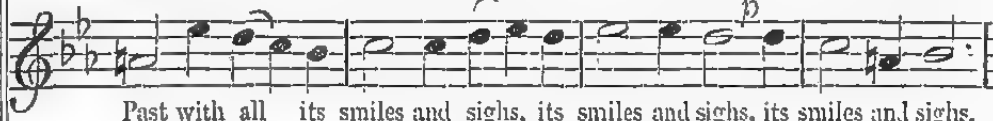
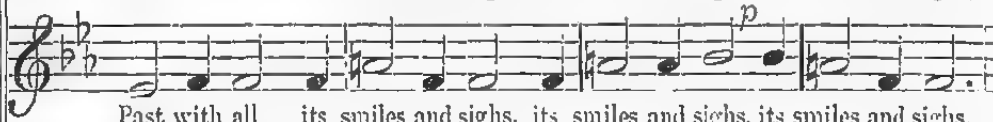
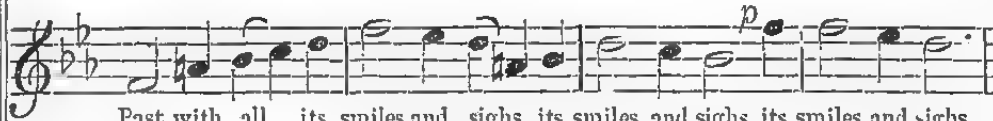
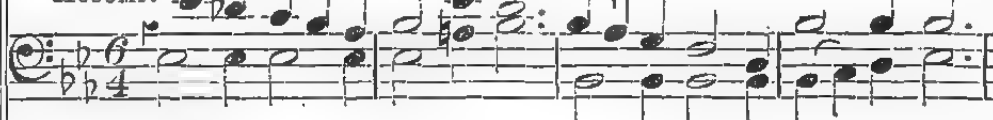
TENOR, Sve. lower.



BASS.

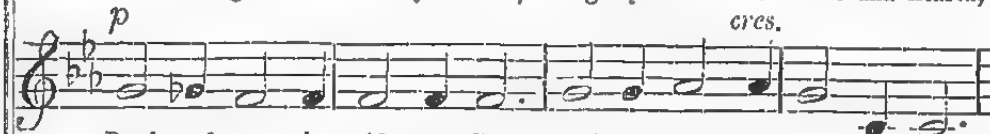


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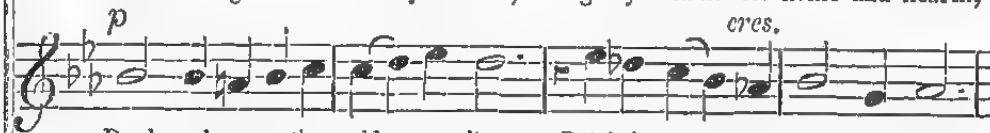




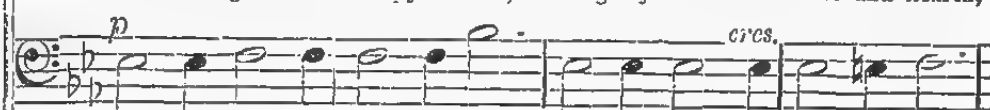
Dead and gone the old year lies; Brightly beams on home and hearth,



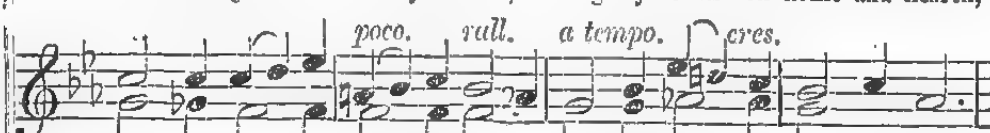
Dead and gone the old year lies; Brightly beams on home and hearth,



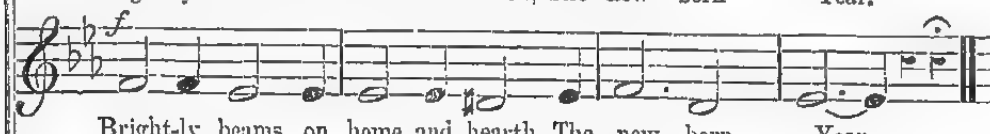
Dead and gone the old year lies; Brightly beams on home and hearth,



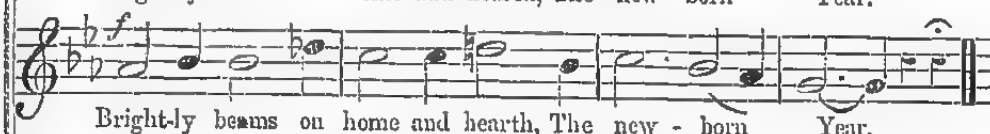
Dead and gone the old year lies; Brightly beams on home and hearth,



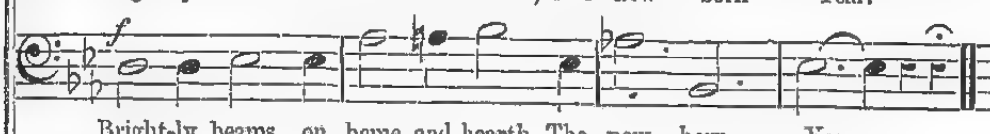
Bright-ly beams on home and hearth, The new - born Year.



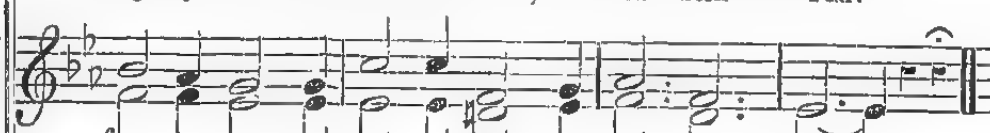
Bright-ly beams on home and hearth, The new - born Year.



Bright-ly beams on home and hearth, The new - born Year.



Bright-ly beams on home and hearth, The new - born Year.



Let the joyous household word,
 With its loving tone be heard,
 Ringing forth with tuneful glee,
 "Happy may the New Year be."
 Welcoming in sweet accord
 The new-born Year.

Leaving all our sin and pain,
 Start we on our course again,
 With the Saviour's Flag unfurl'd,*
 Forth we march to meet the world;
 Toil in Him shall not be vain
 This new-born Year.

When at last our course is run,
 Fought the fight, the vict'ry won;
 Dawns upon our closing eye,
 Shines with light eternally,
 Comes with never setting sun,
 Our new-born Year.

* Repeat "His Flag unfurl'd."

HIS NAME WAS HERO.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FOUR SEASONS."

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

DOGGIE SWIMS FOR HIS LIFE.

YES, his name was Hero; rather a high-sounding name, perhaps, for such an insignificant-looking little animal. And yet those who knew him best thought it suited his unselfish nature admirably. He was the ugliest and the least promising of four puppies born long ago in the house of Mr. Millard, the well-known engraver, with whom he spent the greater part of his life. His three elder brothers being uncommonly handsome were universally admired, and different neighbours bespoke them as soon as they opened their eyes. They were called Rover, Carlo, and Wasp. But the appearance of this little one was so awkward and unattractive that nobody ever thought of giving him any name at all; those who did trouble their heads about him remarking only, that he ought to be drowned, and the sooner the

better. Still, as his mother came of a noble race, his life was spared for a while to see how he might turn out.

Unfortunately, at the end of the time fixed upon he showed no sign of comeliness. On the contrary, besides being singularly small for his age, he had a pinched, famished air, combined with an expression of indescribable misery; and there was a certain degree of wolfishness in his aspect that made people afraid to let him come near them.

"What! not drowned yet! Get away you ugly thing, it is enough to frighten any one to look at you."

Such being the discouraging mode of address to which the poor little creature was accustomed in his infancy, and of which he understood the unloving tone but too well, it could not be wondered at that his manners were shy and ungainly, or, to say the least, anything but winning.

His master thought it was high time to have poor Puppy put out of the way, and he told his grandson Charlie to take him down to the river the first thing in the morning, tie a stone round his neck, and throw him in. He said his friend Mr. Vincent was coming by an early train from London to spend the day with him, and he wanted to get rid of that shabby looking animal before he arrived.

"And mind you pick out a good heavy stone, Charlie," he added, "otherwise the poor thing will come floating back to land."

Now it so happened that Charlie was exceedingly fond of Doggie, as he called him, for want of a better name; for he had discovered that notwithstanding his ugliness, he knew how to play very merrily, was sweet tempered, and as brave as a young lion, and he showed surprising quickness in learning all the tricks he ever saw performed. On his side, Doggie evinced the most unbounded affection for Charlie, who had endeared himself to his heart by constantly treating him with gentleness and consideration.

But besides those reasons for loving Doggie, Charlie could not help feeling compassion for any living thing so neglected and slighted, and above all, so defenceless as was his little playmate. The less kindness the poor thing met with from others, the more he felt bound to protect and cherish him. The idea of having to throw him into the river was therefore most distressing; nevertheless, according to his grandfather's wish, he took Doggie up in his arms, and set out on what he supposed would be their last journey together.

It was a blowy February morning, and the air was exceedingly sharp. A light shower of snow had fallen during the night and lay like white powder on the hard ground; piercing blasts of easterly wind whistled drearily through the yet budless trees; not a sign of vegetation enlivened the face of the earth beneath the bare hedge-rows.

If Charlie had been going on a less melancholy errand he would probably have buried his hands in his pockets and run all the way at the top of his speed to keep himself warm, but now he did not seem to feel the cold in the least, or perhaps it was that he gave it no thought. He crept along as slowly as ever he could, inventing to himself reasons for delay at every step he took. Meanwhile his poor little shivering companion kept on licking his hands and nuzzling into the bosom of his waistcoat trying to attract his attention. But Charlie would not venture to look at him.

Too soon they reached the glassy river gliding so peacefully through the water-meadows fringed with alders and stunted willows and carpeted with marsh marigolds. One of Charlie's principal amusements in summer afternoons was to make a fleet of tiny boats and to set them all a-sailing down the current from the sharp tongue of land upon which he now stood: but he could no longer endure the sight of the water. He turned from it with a shudder and sat down on the grass, the little head resting on his knee and the wistful eyes looking up at him with touching fondness.

"Who could ever think of tying a stone round the neck of such a trusting loving creature? I cannot, no I cannot," said Charlie to himself. "I have a good mind to give him the chance of swimming for his life. That will be the best thing of all, and do it I certainly will."

Having made up his mind so far, he and Doggie went through their most clever tricks by way of a leave-taking. Doggie did his very best, but he was evidently out of spirits. He seemed to have an instinctive dread that something strange and of a sad nature was about to befall him, and, as he knew by experience that Charlie could always help him in time of trouble, he looked piteously into his eyes as if to ask for protection. Charlie found it difficult to refrain from tears, for he knew full well what he had to do.

Very slowly he took off his shoes and stockings, very slowly he drew the legs of his trousers above his knees. Then hurriedly snatching up

Doggie, he dashed down to the water and threw him into the middle of the stream. It was the work of a moment!

Poor Doggie disappeared instantly as if he had been a heavy stone himself, but he rose again to the surface almost immediately. Half swimming, half paddling, his paws endeavouring to catch hold of whatever they met with, he contrived to reach the land. With a good deal of difficulty he scrambled up the slippery weedy bank till he found himself on the dry grass. With a bright glance he looked about for a little minute, and then made straight for the spot where Charlie was standing perfectly motionless, with his back to the river and his eyes fixed on the ground.

Charlie had already heard a muffled sound of splashing and panting, but he did not like to trust his ears. Presently two wet paws and a little cold nose rubbed against his bare legs; he turned half round and beheld his dear old playmate looking quite radiant with joy, and apparently none the worse for his ducking.

"There, you wise Doggie," he said twining one arm round his neck and softly kissing the poor little wet head. "There, I have done it once in a sort of a way, but I will take care never to attempt it again. If Grandfather himself were here he could not do it. I am quite sure he never could!"

And now Charlie paused to consider what he had best do with Doggie, for he hoped to have him henceforth entirely under his own care. He looked at him lovingly, and promised that no one should ever know where he was or even suspect that he still lived.

"And you need not be afraid, old Doggie, of being starved to death," he added, "for you shall have almost all my breakfast and dinner every day."

In the meantime Doggie wagged his tail right merrily, and his beaming eyes looked glad, as if he highly approved of Charlie's intentions on his behalf, and felt proud to possess such a kind-hearted, generous friend.

But how could Charlie manage to conceal a little dog that must betray his hiding-place every time he barked? Where could he obtain food enough to satisfy that growing animal's craving appetite? He evidently had not much idea of the nature of his undertaking.

CHAPTER II.

DOGGIE IN PRISON.

CHARLIE formed a great variety of plans for Doggie's safety and comfort, and, after some deliberation, he decided upon shutting him up by himself in an uninhabited cottage he knew of next to his own home. The two ran a race to it, fortunately without meeting any one they knew on the road. To Charlie's dismay they could not get in, the door being locked and the key taken away. Nor could they enter by the window, for, though not a pane of glass remained, the wooden frame was barred inside.

The only hope left was the empty pigsty built up against one end of the cottage, the other three sides being composed of low stone walls, with palisades on the top. It had the great advantage of being perfectly clean and dry, and part of it was sheltered by a flat roof made of rough deal boards overlapping at the edges and nailed together.

"Only see, Doggie, here is exactly the thing for you, a ready-made kennel!" cried Charlie to his little companion, who was sniffing about into every corner with an air of intense satisfaction.

The door, too, was made of deal boards, and had an iron hasp, not so very rusty, which could be made fast on the outside.

"I daresay Doggie would like to have some sort of a bed to keep him snug and warm at night," was Charlie's next thought.

Forthwith he set diligently to work to collect all the bits of hay and straw he could find lying about on the ground, and then heaped them up as tidily as he could in one corner of the kennel. It made but a comfortless bed after all, and the worst of it was he did not know how to improve it.

Before they parted they had a regular game of play, after which Charlie told his little prisoner that he must stay shut up and be very quiet till he came back at dinner-time. Doggie's face brightened up. He joyfully promised everything with his honest brown eyes as plainly as if he had spoken, and then curled himself up contentedly on his bed to go to sleep.

Charlie soon reached his own door, but, instead of rushing in brimful of glee and flying upstairs with his usual alacrity, he stood hesitating

outside on the gravel walk between the little garden gate and the house, as if unwilling to lift the latch. He looked perplexed and discomposed, for the consciousness that in all his care of Doggie he was really deceiving his grandfather had suddenly been awakened in his mind. He knew that he ought to go to his grandfather at once and tell him exactly what he had been doing, and then ask leave to keep Doggie for his own. He almost meant to do so, but there was something so captivating in the notion of tending a poor animal whom there were so few to love, that he could not give it up. It had the charm of secrecy! It was like an adventure in a story-book!

"Perhaps Grandfather would be seriously angry," he thought, and yet Charlie was no coward. "Perhaps too some one else would drown poor Doggie really. What a dreadful thing that would be!"

The next thing that occurred to him was the dislike Mrs. Millard, or Grannie as she was called, had to letting dogs come into the house. In short he longed to feel convinced that the wisest way was to say nothing about the matter, at all events for the present.

Circumstances appeared to favour his determination to keep silence. Mr. Vincent had so much to talk about to his host, that Charlie crept in unobserved. As for Grannie she was too busy going hither and thither, on hospitable cares intent, to think of speaking to anyone, but she did not forget that Charlie had been out in the cold ever since the early morning, and must naturally be very hungry. She never was unmindful of him, so she filled a plate with good things and set it before him without saying a word.

Somehow Charlie did not feel inclined to touch a morsel, and he made haste to put the contents of his plate into a cabbage leaf he had brought in and laid under the table for the purpose.

While thus engaged he caught Mr. Vincent's eye fixed upon him with a smiling look of curiosity which puzzled him a good deal. He felt himself blush all over, and, with a deep gasp of relief to get away, he darted off with his dinner to Doggie, who rewarded him by eating it all up in two mouthfuls.

Charlie now fancied that Doggie must be thirsty, so he went round the cottage garden to look for water for him to drink. There was a well in one corner, with a rope and a windlass for letting down a pail, but it was all so choked up with nettles and hemlock that it was not possible to draw any water. He found a common red flower-pot saucer

full of rain water, and he brought it in to Doggie to complete the prison furniture.

When Charlie returned to the house the wind had lulled and the sun was shining. He found that his grandfather and Mr. Vincent had gone out to take a long walk, and he knew he should not be missed at home if he gave Doggie a good run in the fields. Swift as an arrow shot from a bow, he flew back to release his prisoner for a while.

Who can describe the glowing joyousness of the pair of friends as they bounded rapidly along or sat on the smooth grass nestling side by side, in close companionship?

As soon as the afternoon light began to fade and the sun was sinking in the crimson sky, Charlie knew that Doggie must be shut up for the night. On their return to the prison Doggie's first thought was to hunt for the cabbage leaf. He turned it over and over, scraping it with his paw, and not finding anything to eat, he looked up disappointedly at Charlie and gave a little hungry whine that went to his heart.

"Poor little thing! I will bring you all my bread and milk as early as I can in the morning. I can go without both breakfast and dinner rather than see you hungry," Charlie said on the spur of the moment.

That same evening, after tea, Grannie was busy knitting a stocking for Charlie, who sat by her side drawing, while Grandfather read the newspaper aloud. Quite suddenly Charlie coloured up to the roots of his hair and burst into a flood of tears.

"My darling child," cried Grannie much alarmed, "what is the matter? Have you cut yourself with that horrid jagged old knife?"

"Oh no!" Charlie sobbed out, "it is about poor, poor Doggie!"

And so he told them everything, even to his wanting not to tell them at all, only it made him too unhappy.

His grandfather saw that he was really very sorry, and sympathised with him. Instead of blaming him, he only said in a mild voice:

"When my friend and I were coming up from the railway we saw you and the little dog standing at the door of the empty cottage in the next garden. I told Mr. Vincent what I guessed you had been doing, and he said he should have done precisely the same thing had he been in your place. I felt sure that you would tell us all about it, sooner or later, for with your candid nature you could not help it, and you see,

dear boy, I was not mistaken. You are welcome to have the little dog for your own, provided you do not run out to play with him at all hours, and that you never bring him into the house."

Then spoke dear Grannie, who could not see anyone distressed or sad without finding out the way to comfort them.

"I have been thinking, Charlie," she said in her pleasant, cheerful tone, "I have been thinking how difficult you will find it to provide food for that growing young animal, he will always be so ravenous. If you go on giving him the lion's share of your own meals you will fall ill to a certainty. That will never do! I can easily supply you with scraps every day for him, but it will not be sufficient when he grows bigger, and then you will be obliged to save up your money to buy dog's meat. You shall have a stone-ware pan to hold plenty of soft water for him to drink, and you must take care never to give him hard water, it is so bad for all animals. That flower-pot saucer must be a great deal too shallow for his broad tongue?"

"Oh yes!" said Charlie, eagerly; "he splashed out the water all over the edges, and hardly lapped up a drop."

"And his bed too," Grannie went on to say, "we must find a piece of carpet and a roomy basket of hay to keep him warm out there all alone in the cold. I think he will like that."

"I am sure he will," cried Charlie, surprised to think how many comforts were required for his little prisoner which he had not once thought of. Jumping up he hugged Grannie round her neck, and, giving her a good squeeze, whispered into her ear:

"Oh Grannie, I do so love Doggie."

"And I am so glad you saved the poor little thing's life," she said, kissing him tenderly.

Once more Charlie felt at peace with himself. He had no longer any thing to conceal, and he could openly enjoy the delight, and what a great delight it was, of taking care of Doggie, now more dear to him than ever.

[*To be continued.*]

THE BAT.

WHEN the summer sun is setting,
And the sky is golden bright,
Scatter'd o'er with crimson cloudlets,
Floating in a flood of light ;

From his corner shyly peeping,
Where he hung secure all day,
Forth the little bat comes creeping ;—
Night's the time for work or play !

When the sun has quite departed
And withdrawn his glorious light—
Leaves the sky all pale, and changes
Scarlet clouds to dusky white :

Then the bat comes forth rejoicing,
Sleeks his ears and combs his hair,
And prepares to take a flourish
In the cool, sweet evening air.

All day long the swallow fieth
O'er the meadows, to and fro ;
Never weary catching insects,
From the dawn till sunset's glow.

But at evening she is tired,
Folds her wings and hides her head ;
Yet her post is not left vacant
For the bat comes out instead ;

And on dusky leathern pinion,
Eddying round in circles, goes ;
While he hunts his dancing supper,
Hungry from his day's repose.

Eagerly the chase pursuing,
How he catches all he meets !
With his mouth wide open flying,
Quickly seizes, kills, and eats !

Now and then a scream triumphant,
(For it can't be called a song,)
Tells that something nice he's eating,
Caught as swift he darts along.

'Tis a cry so fine and piercing,
Few can bear it, 'tis so shrill ;
But enough to show he's happy,
Sporting at his own wild will.

Thus he flits and shrieks unwearied
On the wing the live-long night,
Taking up the swallow's business
From the dusk till morning light.

When the daylight slowly dawning
Flushes all the east with red,
Then the bat in haste retreating,
Wraps his wings around his head.

Flat he lays his long ears backwards
As the sun begins to peep ;
Folds his leathern cloak tight round him,
Snugly then goes off to sleep ;

Fixing in his hooks securely,
And thus safely hangs all day,
Always sleeping head hung downwards—
Cannot rest another way !

Rows of them you'll thus find hanging—
Let us give the bat his due :
There's an air so odd about him,
Something so old-fashioned too !

Now the painters in their pictures,
And the poets in their song,
Add his wings to shapes of evil ;
But I think they do him wrong ;

For to me his strange-shaped pinions
Curiously wrought and made,
Bear no thought of ugly story,
Fearful sight, or gloomy shade ;

But of peaceful cool of evening,
Fresh'ning breeze, and pale, clear sky,
Glow-worms on a grass bank twinkling,
When I see him flitting by.

If you read that book delightful,
Full of Nature's wondrous lore—
"Common Objects of the Country,"
You'll discover more and more ;

How it tells of wild things living,
Tells of mice, and newts, and moles,
Stickle-bats, and frogs, and adders,
Water-rats with curious holes ;

And the bat, dear bat, it tells of—
How he eats, and how he cries,
How the baby bats ride hanging
From their mother as she flies !

Once the author had a fancy,
Kept a bat for some few days,
Just to note its curious fashions,
All its odd and clever ways.

In the twilight he could see it
Comb its hair so soft and black.
With its claw it drew a straight line
For the parting down its back !

Oh, the bat is dear and pretty !
Made with quaint yet simple grace,
With his ears so large and hollow,
And his cosy little face !

Then his wing-bones are thin fingers
Webb'd between to make him fly,
And his teeth are tiny, tiny,
And his voice is shrill and high.

When you sit in quiet twilight,
Ere the candles are brought in,
And the panes grow blue and dusky,
All is still without—within,

Then his form you will see flitting
Up and down before the house,
With his wings spread out and bird-like,
And his body like a mouse.

Happy creature ! they who scan you
Through your workmanship so fine,
Call you neither dark nor ugly,
Own your Maker as divine !

C. E.



“IF EVERY ONE SWEEPED BEFORE HIS OWN DOOR, ALL
THE STREET WOULD BE CLEAN;”

OR, as the proverb says more bluntly, “If every one would mend *one*, all would be mended.” Still, it is not always the bluntest speaking which makes the strongest impression, and an emblem has a great advantage over a proverb in being a two-edged sword, striking two ways, though so delicately that people are not offended by the blow. Anybody can see that the dirtiest village would be made clean if not only the parson and doctor, but shopkeepers, and farmers, and labouring men would all sweep before their own doors, see that their own drains were not stopped up, &c., &c. And, admitting this, he must be worthy a fool’s cap and bells who cannot make the higher application for himself! This is offensive teaching, however, to certain classes of mind. The impetuous enthusiast likes to accomplish grand purposes by grand means,—would with pleasure hire an engine and swill down a dirty street at a blow, with or without neighbours’ con-

sent: would like to initiate some extensive measure of social reform, which should, at any rate for a time, sweep sin from off the face of the earth.

To such, the dull, unimposing, unambitious daily task of sweeping before his own door is repugnant. Nevertheless, whatever else a man do, let him beware how he neglects that!

REVIEWS.

SOME interesting and useful religious publications have been placed in our hands; of these, *A Catechism of the Christian Religion for the Use of Schools*, by the Rev. P. T. Ouvry, M.A., 2nd Edition, Messrs. Rivingtons, London, is an excellent little manual. Here and there it will be found explanatory of our good old Church Catechism, but always in strictest accordance with its principles; while here and there a few useful additions make the little work a valuable supplement. We only wish some of the explanations had been carried somewhat further; those on the second commandment touch on the worshipping God only, for instance: whereas some notice on the prohibition to "fall down before a graven image" might have been added with advantage. This Catechism we must, of course, set down as for children's use, although instruction in first principles is so often neglected, even in the upper classes of society, that occasional reference by older heads to catechisms would be of immense reflected advantage to the young ones they have to instruct.

For older readers, but yet quite within the comprehension and interest of young people from thirteen years upwards, we will mention, *A Christian View of Christian History from Apostolic to Medieval Times*, by J. H. Blunt, M.A., F.S.A., Rivingtons, Waterloo Place, London. "Tell me of some good, interesting Sunday reading for my girls," is a common appeal from mothers;

and this is a want which Mr. Blunt's volume well supplies. It opens with the "birth" of Christianity—describes its "infancy" of miracles and wonders, and proceeds then to an account of the struggle between Christianity and Paganism—passing forward through the breaking-up of Early Christian unity to the Church of the Middle Ages.

That a writer treating ably and agreeably such a deeply interesting branch of history, should be sound and moderate in his religious views, is a fact which cannot be prized too highly, and this is eminently the case in Mr. Blunt's volume.

Nature and Art. From No. 1, June, to No. 7, December. (Day and Son, Limited, 8 Gate Street, London, W.C.)

THIS attractive publication, full of natural history and curiosities of antiquity and art, is a great addition to the popular works of the day. It tells of new plants and new animals—that is, of new discoveries in the scientific world on all sides, and the illustrations are admirable. But independent of these interesting branches of information, we have to mention Professor Aaron Penley's Papers, on "Sketching from Nature"—also well illustrated—as being in themselves all-sufficient to repay any one for the purchase of the Magazine. These instructions make *Nature and Art* a most useful volume in school libraries, and must, we think, ensure its popularity with a large class of the young folks of England.

JANUARY MEMORANDA.



JANUARY was the first of the two months which Numa Pompilius added to the calendar of Romulus. It was named *Januarius* after *Janus*, the deity who presided over peace and war, and who was also the porter of the gates of heaven, in which latter capacity he had the surnames of "The Opener" and "The Shutter." He is generally represented with two faces, though occasionally with four. The two faces are said to be symbolic of his being on earth the guardian of *Gates*; these always, of course, looking two ways. The four faces represent him as lord of the four seasons.

Numa appears to have left March its original place as first month of the year; but before the time of Ovid a change had been effected (probably by Julius Cæsar), which gave January the position of honour. There is no doubt, at any rate, that the Julian or

solar year began with January, although a passage in Cicero has been cited to show that he still considered February the last month of the year, "like the ancients." January 1 was the chief festival day in honour of Janus, and on it the Romans were wont to make each other presents—"strenæ," they were called. They consisted chiefly of sweetmeats and copper coins, the latter engraved on one side with a ship, on the other with the double head of Janus himself. Hence comes, no doubt, the custom of making "New-Year's Gifts," which once prevailed in England to a much greater extent than it does now. With the French, however, the "*Jour d'Etrennes*," or Day of New-Year's Gifts, is still as zealously observed as ever. In Germany, even if they do not give presents, they leave cards. The artist Otto Speckter once made a noble little

etching for the occasion. It was of a poodle holding his master's card in his mouth, suspended by a string; "OTTO SPECKTEN" on the card; "Zum neuen Jahr, 1833," in the corner of the etching. We are too prosaic and business-deep in England to indulge in these little bits of sentiment, but whether we gain in either wisdom or happiness by the suppression may be very much doubted.

Old Verstegan's account of January carries us back to a strange state of things indeed, comparing the past with the present.

"The moneth which wee now call *January*, they" (the Saxons) "called *Wolf-monat*, to wit, *Wolf-moneth*, because people are wont alwayes in that moneth to be in more danger to bee deuoured of wolues than in any season els of the yeare; for that through the extremitie of cold and snow those rauenuous creatures could not fynd of other beasts sufficient to feed upon."

Early in January, viz., January 6, occurs a festival of the church, which has from time immemorial been a source of delight to the children of the Christian world, the feast of Epiphany, or "Twelfth Day" as it is commonly called, from the fact that it falls twelve days after Christmas Day.

The word Epiphany, as most of our readers will have been told, comes from the Greek, and means *manifestation*: the manifestation, a showing of Christ to the Gentiles, being celebrated on the day when the wise men of the East came to offer their royal gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, to our blessed Lord, falling down and worshipping him at the same time as King of kings and Lord of lords. Every one must have seen prints or pictures of this great event, for it has been one of the most favourite subjects of Christian art. But sometimes the beautiful old pictures are misleading on one particular point, which it is as well to clear up. They represent our Lord as a new-born babe in the stable, receiving the adoration of the Magi. Occasionally even a cow and an ass are introduced into the background as explanatory of the scene. But this is not consistent with the Gospel narrative, for we are particularly told that *forty* days after the birth of the holy Infant He was taken to

Jerusalem by Joseph and Mary to be presented in the Temple, according to the customs of the law, on which occasion both Simeon and Anna spoke prophetically concerning Him; after which they all returned "into Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth."

But how could this have been if the visit of the Magi had taken place *twelve* days only after the Saviour's birth? For immediately after the visit of the Magi, they having been warned in a dream to return home without seeing Herod, Joseph was warned in the same way to take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt; which he accordingly did; and we read further that they remained in Egypt until the death of Herod made them feel it safe to return.

The probability is that Joseph and Mary revisited Jerusalem and Bethlehem the next year after the nativity, and that by that time the "three kings," as some suppose them to have been, but at any rate the three Magi, had completed their long star-guided journey from the remote East. This idea is confirmed by the fact that when Herod, finding himself deceived by the Magi, sent out to slay the children in and about Bethlehem, he included all those of *two years old* as well as under—a cruelty which even Herod had no motive to perpetrate to secure the death of an infant a few days old. Nor does this appear to have been only a rough guess made to cover all possibilities. Herod, it must be remembered, had inquired "diligently," *i.e.*, very particularly, of the Magi at what time the star had appeared which had lit them from their distant land on the strange errand of finding the king it announced, and thus had obtained a clue to the date of the nativity itself. For that Herod *believed* both in the prophecy concerning Bethlehem and in the divine direction of the star, there appears no doubt. How in the face of such belief he dared attempt to thwart the designs of the Almighty, is one of those mysteries of the human heart which tell us plainly enough that

"The tree of knowledge is not that of life."

One more interesting fact remains to be noted. In the ancient church the "Epiphany" comprehended the Feast of the Nativity as

well as the visit of the Magi—the former day being called the “greater,” and the latter the “lesser” Epiphany. In the former he was “manifested” to the chosen people only; in the latter, by accepting the homage of the Gentiles, he showed that the barrier between the chosen people and the outer world was now to be broken down. A blessing which we who have become almost fatally used to the possession of “Christian privileges” scarcely value as we ought.

As a day of festivity, few rival our Epiphany, or Twelfth Day; and its amusements have always been specially adapted to children. Twelfth cake, the drawing for king and queen, and all the sports consequent upon that time-honoured game, remain fresh in the memory of old people who have outlived more important recollections, and are, we hope, rejoicing the hearts of many young ones by an anticipation of delight. Nor will they enjoy themselves less for listening to our few grave words about the holy festival itself. The young ones, though they will, we hope, have been taken to church to hear the services of the day, may not have so clearly understood all they have listened to as to render our brief remarks useless.

814. January 28.—Death of Charlemagne. “Neither history nor fable,” says an enthusiastic French writer, “present to us a monarch who better deserved the name of Great than *Charlemagne*. The whole course of his reign was a succession of victories and conquests. He was opposed by every nation around him, but he braved them all, and made all submit to his laws. Attacked at the same time from distant quarters, we find him passing, with a rapidity quite marvellous, from the Pyrenees to the heart of Germany—from the extremity of Italy to the coasts of the sea; while in the very midst of his military undertakings he regulated his kingdom as if a profound peace prevailed throughout it. Lawyers and politicians of the present day even, respect and admire the wisdom which pervades his ‘Capitularies’ (Chapters of Laws), and religion and literature are also under the greatest obligations to him. He assembled frequent and numerous councils for the rooting out of

errors, the reformation of manners, and the re-establishment of discipline. He established public schools in various places; and to set an example to others, he opened an academy in his own palace, at the head of which he sat himself, having for assistants many learned men of the day—Alcuin, Peter of Pisa, and others. Nor was Charles out of place in such a position. He spoke Latin as if it had been his native tongue, and understood the other languages of Europe.”

Making due allowance for the extravagance of this eulogium, it is clear that Charlemagne was a most remarkable man, and very far in advance of his age. He was born about the year 742, in the Castle of Salzburg in Bavaria, being eldest son of *Pepin le Bref*, King of the Franks. King Pepin left two sons; but on the death of the second, Carloman, Charles took possession of the whole kingdom, notwithstanding that Carloman left two sons. His title was rather a dubious one, therefore; but in those days a strong head and hand were required for rule, and it was no great wonder that they superseded the law of descent. Eginhart, Charlemagne’s secretary, gives the inscription over the place of his interment, in the Church of *Nôtre Dame* at Aix-la-Chapelle, as follows: “Here lies the body of Charles, the great and orthodox Emperor. He extended gloriously the empire of the Franks, and reigned gloriously 47 years. He died a septuagenarian on the 28th of January, 814.” His body was lowered into a vault, and having been embalmed, was seated on a throne of gold. He was probably the only individual ever so buried. They clothed him in his imperial robes, and bound his *joyeuse* (the sword he bore, so called) round him. In one hand he held a golden globe; the other was placed upon the book of the Gospels, which lay on his knee. His golden sceptre and buckler were suspended before him on the wall; and thus leaving him, his friends closed and sealed the tomb, after filling it with aromatic perfumes, and leaving behind in it a large amount of treasure. “Formerly a man magnificently dressed was laid in a simple tomb,” concludes the Frenchman; “now the tomb is superb outside, but its inmate has no clothing but a shroud.”

So much for history. As a hero of romance, Charlemagne is only rivalled by our own King Arthur, who, by the way, flourished some 256 years previously.

It would really be a task to number the romances which have been written upon the history of Charlemagne, and the adventures of his Paladins and Court. Among the many subjects thus afforded, however, perhaps that of the "Battle of Roncevalles" has been most popular. The treachery of Ganelon, Orlando's magic horn, his sword Durindana, the friendship of Rinaldo, and Charlemagne's grief, have been the theme of Italian poetry ever since the days of Luigi Pulci (1431), who first took up the Charlemagne Era (in however odd a way himself) as the foundation for a new school of poetry—the romantic epic; and those who succeeded him carried it to the (possibly) highest pitch of perfection. A very charming English poem by the late John Herman Merivale, "Orlando in Roncevalles," could not fail to interest any readers who feel inclined to pursue this subject.*

1649. January 30.—Execution of King Charles I. Some terrible events of history have taken place in this month. On the above day King Charles I. was executed like a criminal on a scaffold erected in front of the Banqueting House, Whitehall, London; and on January 21, 1793, Louis XVI. of France suffered a similar fate at Paris. "It must needs be that offences come," we are told by Holy Scripture. "But woe unto him by whom the offence cometh" is equally written. Of whatever faults the King in one case, and society in the other, or the King and the upper classes of society in both cases, were guilty, they formed no ground of justification for the regicidal acts we have recorded. The private virtues of both these unfortunate sovereigns are on record in the hearts of their countrymen. The scaffold of Charles I. was "not so much elevated above the street but that he could hear the weeping and prayers for him below." And of poor Louis XVI. the following pretty little anecdote will serve to show

what affectionate feelings he both possessed and inspired in the days before a reckless philosophy had attempted to gain reform through the self-destructive and bloody process of revolution. "The winter of 1784," says a French writer, "was almost as severe as those of 1776 and of 1709, and was equally signalized by the liberality of the King and Queen. And it was on this last occasion that a monument of unprecedented manufacture was raised by the people in commemoration of the royal kindness shown to the poverty-stricken and afflicted. January 21 (the same date as his day of execution nine years after), a crowd of the sufferers who had been indebted for life itself to the liberality of Louis, assembled in the *Place Louis Quinze*, and there built up a snow obelisk of gigantic size, to which they attached the following remarkable inscription, in testimony of their gratitude: 'Louis, the poor, whom thy bounty supports, can only raise to thee a monument of snow; but it will be more acceptable to thy generous heart than marble purchased by the tears of the unhappy:'

"*'Louis, les indigens, que ta bonté protège,
Ne peuvent t'élever qu'un monument de neige;
Mais il plait davantage à ton cœur généreux
Que le marbre payé des pleurs des malheureux.'*"

Perhaps one of the most practical lessons to be learnt from a review of such dark pages of history as our "Great Rebellion," and the French Revolution of 1793, is, the responsibility of individuals. People talk so fluently of national judgments and national sins, that they forget they have any share in the matter. "Shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this?" has for centuries of Christian worship been read in the ears of the multitude; but to what purpose? Most of the sins we call national are merely the sins of individuals, one following another's example, as if by sinning in company the heinousness of the offence could be got rid of. Sure, however, as men sow the wind shall they reap the whirlwind. While praying for prosperity to country and Queen, therefore, it behoves every one to sweep from his own door the abomination which, when the cup of God's fury is full, may bring down His judgments upon our heads.

* "Poems, Original and Translated." By J. H. Merivale, W. Pickering, 1838. Vol. 2.

1725. January 28.—Death of the Czar, Peter the Great. We spoke of this monarch in a previous number (May), and gave him the credit he so well deserved for his great abilities and indomitable perseverance. Intellectually, indeed, he was civilized far beyond his contemporaries; but, alas! the same cannot be said of his moral character. A violent and uncontrolled temper made him at times the most savage of tyrants, or almost the most tyrannical of savages! He was aware of this in his sober moments; but, as has been well remarked, the defect is not one which can be repaired by its acknowledgment. He once drew his sword upon General Le Fort, to whom he was indebted for some of his best projects of reform; and when awakened afterwards to a sense of shame for his violence, he asked his pardon in these words: "I have reformed my country, but have not been able to reform myself."

Two other anecdotes are told on the same subject. On the occasion of a quarrel between himself and his wife, Catherine, whom he had raised from very humble birth to the throne, he in his anger threw down and broke in pieces a fine Venetian glass. Then turning to her he made the taunting remark (alluding to her origin), "You see that it only needs one stroke of my hand to reduce this glass to the dust from which it was taken." Catherine looked at him, with her eyes full of tears: "You have broken what was an ornament to your palace," exclaimed she; "is that improved, think you, by the loss?" These words appeased the Czar's anger; but he only half granted the petition which had roused his fury. She had asked pardon for one of the ladies of her bedchamber, who had been sentenced to receive eleven strokes of the knout. He commuted the punishment to five!

On a quite different occasion, a nobleman, with whom he was crossing a river in a boat, contradicted him in conversation. Peter seized

him round the waist, intending to throw him into the water. "You may drown me," said the nobleman, "but your history will tell of it." The Czar was struck in a moment by the idea, and embracing him, requested the renewal of his friendship.

Some excuse may be made for Peter in consideration of his autocratic position. No human being, we will venture to say, can be entrusted safely with unlimited power; and the Russian character has probably been greatly influenced by the position of autocrat and subject-lord and serf.

Of whom in particular the following anecdote is told we are unable to say. It may probably be considered rather a typical than a real one.

A Russian nobleman travelling in France was visiting at a chateau surrounded by fine gardens, in the midst of which stood a shed of beehives. The hostess was proud of her bees, and may have boasted a little.

"They will not bear comparison with ours, nevertheless, madame," remarked the Russian coolly; "ours are ten times the size—as big as birds, in fact."

"How inconveniently large your beehives must be then!" exclaimed the hostess, rather piqued.

"Not a bit of it, madame," replied the Russian; "our beehives are the same size as your own."

"What! entrance-holes and all?" cried the hostess.

"Entrance-holes and all," repeated the Russian.

The hostess laughed derisively.

"But if the bees are as big as birds, how can they get in?" said she.

The Russian extended two forefingers significantly towards the beehive, and replied between his teeth—

"Madame! they MUST!"

ED.